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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

END OF DAYS?

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OTTAWA metro®

Thursday, December 20, 2012

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Sex-assault victim's 911 call helps police nab suspect

Courage. Call came while attacker armed with boxcutter was still in woman's home: Cops

A man suspected of a Buckingham home invasion that led to the sexual assault of a mother of three Tuesday was set to appear in a Gatineau courtroom Wednesday.

Police arrested 35-year-old Walter Gagnon not far from the victim's home roughly an hour and a half following the attack, based on information they received from the victim after the assault.

"They did not know each other," said Gatineau police spokesman Sgt. Jean-Paul Le May. "That's what makes this case so peculiar. It's rare."

Sgt. Le May said the attack happened early Tuesday morning when the assailant entered the victim's home through an unlocked door carrying a boxcutter at around 8 a.m.

"She is the mother of three," said Sgt. Le May, indicating the woman lives with her husband and children in a suburban Buckingham home. "Her children and husband had just left the house."

The victim was sexually assaulted and the assailant fled soon after, police said, but not before the woman was able to call 911.

"She was able to struggle her way out of the situation and was able to call 911," Sgt. Le May said, noting she escaped with minor injuries.

"The call was made while the aggressor was still in the home. Our dispatchers did a great job of calming her down and getting valuable information that led to an arrest." GRAHAM LANKTREE/METRO

ALL ABOARD THE LRT

Council gave unanimous approval on Wednesday to the $2.13-billion LRT project. For more on the story, turn to page 4. Above, an artist's conception of one of the LRT stations. CONTRIBUTED

Local man rescued in B.C.

Ottawa snowboarder Sebastien Boucher is recovering after being rescued from a wilderness area north of Vancouver where he was stranded for two days PAGE 6

He's out of this world!

Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield blasts off into outer space, set to become the first Canadian to command the International Space Station PAGE 10

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Clinic offering free dental care to Ottawa's needy

Teeth. Organizers want to make free clinic an annual, citywide event

GRAHAM LANKTREE
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An Ottawa dental clinic is offering "smiles on us" this Christmas with a plan to give free teeth cleaning, tooth extractions and fillings this Saturday to those who can't often afford them.

"Many people are going to the food bank this year. If they're going there, dentistry probably isn't part of their top five priorities," said Amanda Fayad, the business manager of Barrhaven's Chapman Mills Dental, which she co-owns with her husband, dentist Dr. John Fayad.

"Our goal is to treat 100 people. I think we're expecting to pull out a lot of teeth that day," said Fayad, who expects to see a lineup at the clinic. "We want to give them the opportunity to fill a tooth that they may lose later, or pull out teeth that are causing pain."

Fayad said that the clinic's staff won't ask questions of those who visit. "We just hope that they can sleep at night if they aren't telling the truth. If you're down on your luck and struggling to afford it, whoever is in line first will get in first."

The clinic couldn't do it alone, Fayad said, adding that sponsors have come on board and that the clinic will be staffed by four general dentists, one of the best oral surgeons in town, their assistants, hygienists and a number of medical doctors and nurses who wanted to help out triaging patients.

"As soon as I put the idea out, doctors approached me on their own," she said. "If you look into the latest studies, oral health is extremely important for your overall health, especially for children, where it has a preventative effect."

Owners of Barrhaven's Chapman Mills Dental, dentist Dr. John Fayad and his wife Amanda Fayad (in the dental chair) will offer free services for Ottawa's needy Dec. 22. CONTRIBUTED/COUVRETTE PHOTOGRAPHY

The most wonderful LOLs of the year

Singer Jonathan Estabrooks schmoozes the camera while crooning his way through a class-project video by Algonquin College students. YOUTUBE.COM

Gather together friends of friends who can dance, a singer from New York and the best Internet memes of 2012, and you have the makings of a viral-worthy music video.

"The song was better than any of us ever expected," said Nick Tessier, an Algonquin College TV-broadcasting student who helped produce The Most Wonderful Memes of the Year. From grumpy cat to a new interview with Sweet Brown and McKayla Maroney's sour-puss face at the London Olympics, the video recaps 2012's most popular Internet sensations.

"I think Internet memes are something everyone can relate to. You can get a laugh from something so simple," said Tessier. "My favourite has to be Sweet Brown's cold pop escape. It's basically this woman from the south U.S. giving a TV new interview after her apartment building caught fire."

Tessier said his class wanted to top a video by last year's students that went viral with 590,000 views.

"Last year's video was a lot of fun and shot in the moment," said Jeremy Atherton, an instructor and co-ordinator of the program of the video made by students in 2011 featuring Darth Vader conducting a flash mob of storm troopers. "But the bar on creativity seems to be getting higher. We wanted to showcase our production values."

Atherton said that student Eric Kummel, who adapted Christmas classic It's The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year, "hit all the touchstone moments in a clever way."

Next year, he said, he hopes students will be able to top the 2011 and 2012s videos.

Watch the video at metronews.ca.

GRAHAM LANKTREE/METRO

LRT. Rideau Transit Group to double bike parking

Ottawa's light-rail project received its anticlimactic final approval on Wednesday, with councillors voting unanimously to move ahead with a $2.13-billion deal with Rideau Transit Group.

In a much more modest affair than the initial announcement two weeks ago, councillors gave a final set of directions to staff, made a few train metaphors and voted 24-0 to approve the deal.

Mayor Jim Watson once again thanked staff and councillors for seeing this iteration of the light-rail transit plan through. "I'm obviously very proud of this historic day in our city's history," he said before the vote.

"It's not often ... that we have a chance to make a decision that will have such a transformative impact on our city. It's one of those once-in-a-generation or once-in-a-lifetime opportunities."

There was one significant change to the plan on Wednesday. Rideau Transit Group, the consortium that will build the 12.5-kilometre line, announced that it intends to double the amount of bicycle parking at the Confederation Line's stations.

"We understand the importance of cycling amenities in this city and we hope that this gesture will be well-received by Ottawa cycling advocates, Ottawa City Council and the general public," reads a letter from Riccardo Consentino, RTG's bid director.

Work on the Confederation Line is expected to start next year and be finished in 2018.

ALEX BOUTILIER/METRO

Campaign cash. Bloess unyielding on banning donations from developers

The only sitting councillor who voted against developer contributions to municipal-election campaigns said he'd vote the same way if the matter were to come up again.

Coun. Rainer Bloess (Innes) said he's voted consistently for the ban whenever it has come before council. He said that's not an indictment of those of his colleagues who accept cash from developers to cover campaign expenses.

"There's always a perception, and (a ban) is probably the purest, easiest way to put that perception to rest, even though I think it's a false perception," Bloess said on Wednesday.

A group of 30 community groups called on councillors to enact a suite of reforms to the way the city handles planning and development. Banning donations from developers who do work for the city was one.

Community concerns

"It's not like federal or provincial campaigns, where there are many layers between a given industry and the actual elected representative. At the municipal level, these councillors are directly approving or not approving individual applications on planning committee."

Jay Baltz, Hintonburg Community Association

The issue last came before council in 2009. Several councillors still sitting — Steve Desroches, Shad Qadri, Diane Deans, Eli El-Chantiry, Peter Hume, Bob Monnette, Jan Harder, Marian Wilkinson and Maria McRae — voted against the ban. ALEX BOUTILIER/METRO

Renovations can resume on Somerset House, at Bank and Somerset streets, now that the developer's lawsuit against the city has been settled.

ALEX BOUTILIER/METRO

No more duking it out over Somerset House

It's a deal. TKS Holdings to pay city $650K in final settlement of lawsuit over troubled property

ALEX BOUTILIER
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City hall and a developer have resolved outstanding issues surrounding a longstanding eyesore on Bank Street.

TKS Holdings has agreed to drop a $5-million lawsuit against the city and move ahead with the redevelopment of Somerset House, a heritage building at 352 Somerset St. W. TKS will also pay the city $650,000.

In exchange, Ottawa City Hall will drop legal action against TKS and waive sidewalk-encroachment fees "as a sign of goodwill" as well as motivation for TKS "to act as quickly as possible in developing the site," according to a motion read by Somerset Coun. Diane Holmes on Wednesday.

"We have reached a decision, an agreement with the owner that he will go ahead and fix the building that's partially demolished and return it to a heritage state," Holmes said after a council meeting.

"I'm looking forward to that site being returned to its heritage designation."

Holmes said the developer has had numerous potential tenants interested in renting at the downtown building.

An interview request to TKS was not returned as of press time.

In late 2007, TKS undertook renovation work without a building permit. The renovations resulted in a partial collapse, and led to a building-code order stating the entire building was at risk of collapse.

A partial demolition ensured the building stayed upright, but cost the city $316,201, including over $226,000 in legal fees, the city says.

Making history

"I'm looking forward to that site being returned to its heritage designation."

Somerset Coun. Diane Holmes

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Homicide. Psychiatric assessment ordered for accused in murder trial

Keith Ru, who is accused of killing the man with whom he shared an apartment on Meadowlands Drive, was ordered to undergo a 30-day psychiatric assessment to determine if he is fit to stand trial.

Ru was charged with second-degree murder in the death of Jai le Zhao, 21, whose dead body was found inside a low-rise apartment on Dec. 6.

The accused appeared disheveled as he made a brief court appearance Wednesday, sporting unkempt hair and an oversized white T-shirt. He didn't say anything, other than a few whispered words to his lawyer, Oliver Abergel.

Ru is expected to return to court Jan. 18.

Police were called to the pair's apartment at 1189 Meadowlands Drive on Dec. 6 at about 3:30 a.m., where they found Ru and Le Zhao.

JOE LOFARO/METRO

Books on Beechwood. Mystery buyer saves shop from closing down

Books on Beechwood CONTRIBUTED

Workers at the Books on Beechwood store are breathing a sigh of relief after a longtime customer has saved the shop from closing its doors permanently.

Employee Antoinette Fracassi said the buyer, who is being kept anonymous for now, will take over the independent bookstore's lease in January.

Store owner Jean Barton was planning to sell the business next month after serving the New Edinburgh community for more than 18 years.

"I feel great because it's like a little bit of a hub in the community. People come in, we chat, keep up on the news and they give us news. It's a great meeting-gathering place," she said.

Fracassi gets to keep her job, too.

She said the new buyer approached Barton last month. The store will operate normally in the new year in the same location on Beechwood Avenue, and all five part-time staff will stay on.

JOE LOFARO/METRO

An undated photo from rescued Ottawa snowboarder Sebastien Boucher's Facebook profile. CONTRIBUTED/FACEBOOK

Snowboarder safe after two days in harsh mountains

In stable condition. B.C.'s North Shore Search and Rescue team finds Ottawan as snowstorm comes barrelling down

A 33-year-old snowboarder from Ottawa is recovering after being rescued from a wilderness area north of Vancouver where he was stranded for two days.

Sebastien Boucher got lost on Sunday after straying out of bounds near the Cypress Mountain ski area.

Initial attempts to find him were hampered by poor weather and the risk of avalanches, but searchers managed to locate his tracks late Tuesday in a gully near the Sea-to-Sky Highway.

A Cormorant helicopter was brought in to lift him out of the area and take him to safety, where he was pronounced in stable condition despite his ordeal.

Boucher's mother, Micheline Simoneau, is praising the North Shore Search and Rescue team, calling them "angels" and "the best in the world."

The rescue came in the nick of time as a new snowstorm barrelled down on the Vancouver area following one on Tuesday that snarled morning commuter traffic.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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After a year working to avoid buying anything brand new, an experiment which saw Ottawa's Shirley Manh make her own toothpaste, Manh plans to open the city's first trade school where teachers and students will barter goods for knowledge. GRAHAM LANKTREE/METRO

A different kind of school for trades

Trade School Co-op Ottawa. Forget tuition in cash — this new school will be all about barter, says founder

GRAHAM LANKTREE
graham.lanktree@metronews.ca

A new school set to arrive in Ottawa in January aims to have its students trading everything from old blenders to iPods with their teachers in exchange for lessons.

"It's a free-form school that runs on barter. In lieu of a participation fee, teachers will come up with a list of things they want or need," said Shirley Manh, who plans to start the Trade School Co-op Ottawa on a $1,000 award from non-profit Awesome Ottawa.

Classes will run the gamut of interests, Manh said. "There could be a class on how to bake bread. It's a skill a lot of people used to have but don't anymore. I imagine there are going to be a lot of creative classes," she said. "It's about getting people to recognize the capacity that lies in themselves and the community and all the talents they have to share."

With a barter school already established in Toronto, Manh was driven to start her own after spending a year working to avoid buying anything brand new. "I thought about how much stuff I owned," she said. "I made my own toothpaste and household cleaning products. Toothpaste is just baking soda, a bit of water and sweetener. I had to make it three times before I got it right."

The experiment, Manh said, connected her with Toronto's Shannon Simmons, a.k.a. the Barter Babe, who gave up her job to barter her expertise for items she needs. It also made her more aware of different ways of exchanging goods and services arising from the global recession.

"I can't say it's the only thing affecting people to think of new ways to acquire goods and services," Manh said of the recession. "Craigslist, Kijiji and ride shares are becoming really popular. People want a connection to where their money is going."

Follow Graham Lanktree on Twitter @MetroGraham

Details

- Classes will run roughly 90 minutes.
- Classes can be a one-off or part of a series.
- There will be space for trade-school classes.
- The school will be a part of an international network, which currently offers singing for pleasure (Glasgow) and macrobiotic cooking (Barcelona).
- To learn more about the global Trade School network, visit tradeschool.coop.

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New online scam holds computers hostage

Cybercrime.
'Ransomware' locks your data, scares you into paying and may soon hit cellphones and businesses, experts say

Visit a porn site and you could have your computer locked down and an online ransom demanded as part of a security threat now expected to spread to other areas of the cyber world in 2013.

It's called "ransomware" and the idea is to scare computer users into paying money to get their machine working again and their data back, said Kevin Haley of Symantec Corp., maker of software security programs.

"The scam is usually, 'Hey we see that you have pornography on your machine and we're the police and you're going to jail for it," Haley said — unless you pay a fine or "ransom," he added.

At risk

"It's not just going after people who visited pornographic sites, it's going after anybody."
Kevin Haley, director at software security company Symantec Corp.

That means being told online by cybercriminals to buy a prepaid card with a specific amount. The user enters the card's PIN number on the computer keyboard's numeric pad, the only thing not locked down, Haley said.

Smaller corporations, executives and even individuals, all of whom may not have their data backed up, are at risk in 2013 as attackers broaden their base, he said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Security experts warn of "ransomware," where thieves can lock up your online data and demand payment for it. RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jerusalem

Holy site receives half a billion in cheques

Worshippers usually leave notes to the Almighty at one of Judaism's holiest sites. But half a billion dollars?

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch, who oversees Jerusalem's Western Wall, said a worshipper found an envelope at the site Wednesday with 507 checks in the amount of about $1 million each. They were not addressed to anyone, and it's doubtful they can be cashed.

Rabinovitch said most of the cheques are Nigerian. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Break-in

Freeze! It's the ice-cream thief

Don't call this one a cold case.

Windsor, Ont., police are on the hunt for a man who broke into an ice-cream parlour on Sunday and helped himself to some soft-serve straight from the machine.

Around 5 a.m., police were dispatched to the Twistee Treat kiosk on Wyandotte Street East. A surveillance video shows the man checking for money in the cash register before putting his mouth on the ice cream dispenser and flicking the switch.

LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

Just dropping in — with some holiday cheer

U.S. Air Force Capt. Dereck Monnier, 36th Airlift Squadron pilot and aircraft commander, wears a Santa hat during a flight over Micronesia Tuesday as part of Operation Christmas Drop, a 61-year-old annual humanitarian airlift mission. The air crew carried a bundle of supplies donated from around the Pacific Region to help remote islanders who do not have access to modern industry and supply chains.

U.S. AIR FORCE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Hail the Cosmo Canuck!

Up, up and away.
Chris Hadfield blasts off from Kazakhstan on a mission to head the International Space Station

No sleeping, please — you're spacemen. Russian cosmonaut Roman Romanenko, left, U.S. astronaut Tom Marshburn and Canada's Chris Hadfield play a little snoozing joke on the media after putting on their spacesuits before blastoff at the Baikonur Cosmodrome. Next stop: The International Space Station.
SHAMIL ZHUMATOV/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Now call him Cosmo Chris.

Chris Hadfield has successfully blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

He was on his way Wednesday on a mission to become the first Canadian to command the International Space Station.

Hadfield is travelling to the space station on board a Russian Soyuz capsule for a five-month visit to the giant orbiting space lab.

He is sharing the trip to the space station with NASA astronaut Tom Marshburn and Russian cosmonaut Roman Romanenko.

Governor-General David Johnston called Hadfield's launch "a great day for Canada, a great day for the world of discovery and innovation.''

He joined the families of Canadian Space Agency employees at its headquarters south of Montreal to watch the event on a giant TV screen.

"We're so proud that Chris Hadfield now is up in space — the first Canadian to be commanding the space station in March," he said.

"And now we simply pray for a continued safe mission and a safe return."

During his stay, Hadfield, an avid guitar player, plans to do some strumming to help him deal with homesickness.

The 53-year-old space veteran will also be involved with more than 130 experiments including Micro-flow, a Canadian blood-sampling experiment which he compared to a hospital in a box.

Hadfield will become the first Canadian to command the space station during the second half of his mission.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pension surplus

Big unions lose fight for $28B

The Supreme Court of Canada says several major public unions are not entitled to a $28-billion pension surplus the government hived off to help pay down the deficit.

The court ruled 9-0 that the government is not obliged to return the funds.

The unions argued the government improperly took their money.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Youth now key

Feds make point on immigration

The points system used to decide who can immigrate to Canada is getting a makeover.

The new judging criteria for the federal skilled worker program will award more points to younger immigrants and change the way the government looks at work experience and education.

The way points are allocated for language ability will also change.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Smarten up. IQ tests are just too simple by half, researcher warns

A new study released Wednesday suggests IQ tests aren't all they're cracked up to be.

"I think IQ tests are a massive over-simplification," said Adam Hampshire, one-half of the team of researchers who debunked the IQ myth.

"I would be incredibly skeptical of their results."

Traditional IQ tests favour one type of intelligence, said Hampshire. But people can be smart in multiple ways.

Hampshire and his partner Adrian Owen, from Western University's Brain and Mind Institute, created a new test that was able to gauge a person's intelligence in a variety of streams.

It was posted online and gathered tens of thousands of hits in just a few weeks.

"The day the initial trial went live, thousands of people signed on and they broke it," said Hampshire. "People started emailing their scores and putting them on Facebook, challenging their friends and it went viral.

"It was exhilarating and remarkably stressful."

The massive response gave the duo a broad sample of information about people from around the world aged 12 to 70.

The study found that there are three main types of intelligence. One relates to short-term memory, another deals with reason and logic, and the last shows a person's strength at variable testing.

AMANDA GRANT/
FOR METRO IN LONDON

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A new-year bow tie awaits Ikea monkey

Little primate's a viral star. Yasmin Nakhuda says Darwin was taken from her illegally and she's facing a court fight on Thursday

Yasmin Nakhuda leads a protest Wednesday at Toronto Animal Services at 1300 Sheppard Ave. W. in a bid to get her pet monkey Darwin back. Darwin became an international viral sensation after being found in an Ikea parking lot. TARA WALTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Yasmin Nakhuda has everything ready for her little monkey to come home:

A tiny Santa Claus suit for Christmas, a bow tie for New Year's, and a cottage rented in Kawartha Lakes, where it's not yet illegal to own a monkey.

On Thursday she'll be asking the court to return Darwin swiftly.

On Dec. 9, Darwin was found wandering in a north Toronto Ikea parking lot.

A photo of him in a faux-shearling coat soon made its way to Twitter and from there spread around the world.

It even landed Darwin a nod from The Guardian newspaper in its 10 fashion moments of the year.

Bylaw officials asked Nakhuda to surrender the animal and fined her $240 under the Toronto Municipal Code for keeping a prohibited animal.

The opposing side in her court case is requesting an adjournment, something that would give Kawartha Lakes time to enact an exotic-animals ban already in the pipeline.

Speaking outside Toronto Animal Services, Nakhuda talked about the trauma.

"Unless you've owned a primate, you cannot understand what it is to lose one," said Nakhuda, who works as a real-estate lawyer.

About 30 supporters, many friends and family members, attended a protest Wednesday at Toronto Animal Services' 1300 Sheppard Ave. W. location.

Nakhuda's children — 16-year-old Omar and 12-year-old Misha — held signs that featured a picture of Darwin behind bars and read: "Free Darwin now!"

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Man arrested

Now the joke's on the clown

There was nothing funny about a clown who stopped by a credit union in Winnipeg.

The man — who police said Wednesday was dressed like a clown, complete with a pair of fake breasts — also had a gun and robbed the credit union of an undisclosed amount of cash.

A man was arrested later and is facing charges. METRO IN WINNIPEG

Canada not so jolly

Happy? You're in Latin America

The world's happiest people aren't in Qatar, the richest country by most measures. They aren't in Japan, the nation with the highest life expectancy. Canada doesn't make the top 10.

A poll released Wednesday of nearly 150,000 people around the world says seven of the world's 10 countries with the most upbeat attitudes are in Latin America.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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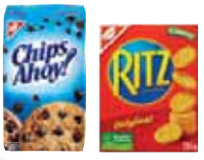

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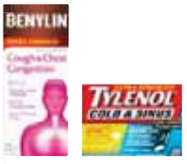

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Dominique Strauss-Kahn leaves his Paris apartment earlier this month. The former IMF chief lost his bid to have prostitution charges against him thrown out. JACQUES BRINON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Strauss-Kahn's legal problems not quite over

Lille, France. The only case remaining involves Strauss-Kahn's suspected role in a hotel prostitution ring

French judges decided Wednesday not to drop pimping charges against former International Monetary Fund chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn, according to his lawyers, who had sought to have the case thrown out.

The defence quickly vowed to appeal.

Strauss-Kahn, 63, is fresh off a legal settlement reached in the U.S. last week with Nafissatou Diallo, the New York hotel maid who had accused him of rape in May 2011.

That accusation torpedoed his once-illustrious political career, and was followed by other allegations of sex-related wrongdoing.

No convictions so far

"We are certain that Dominique Strauss-Kahn will be cleared of all charges against him."
Frederique Baulieu, the former IMF chief's lawyer

None has led to a conviction. The only case remaining is the investigation into Strauss-Kahn's suspected role in a hotel prostitution ring in the northern French city of Lille.

An appeals court in nearby Douai on Wednesday maintained preliminary charges filed against Strauss-Kahn in March for aggravated procurement in an organized gang — meaning the probe can continue.

He is one of several defendants in the case, which allegedly involves prominent city figures and police.

A French writer also claimed that Strauss-Kahn tried to rape her in 2003 but prosecutors threw out her case because it happened too long ago. The one-time presidential hopeful resigned from his IMF job and saw his international reputation collapse. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Oshawa

Man accused of sexual assault at Gate 3:16 shelter

A man who worked and volunteered at an Oshawa shelter has been charged with sexual assault in several alleged incidents dating back up to 15 years. Police say a number of adult women recently came forward with the allegations. Earl Sanderson, 67, of Scugog Township, is charged with four counts of sexual assault. Anyone with information is asked to contact police.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

U.K. British minister falsely accused by cop?

Detectives are probing "very serious" allegations that a police officer fabricated claims against a British MP who was forced to quit a cabinet post after being accused of insulting police with the term "pleb," the prime minister said Wednesday.

Andrew Mitchell quit as the government's chief whip after he was accused of hurling the word at officers who stopped him from riding his bicycle through the Downing Street gates. Last week, a police officer from the diplomatic protection squad was arrested for alleged misconduct in public office. Channel 4 News has claimed the officer emailed his local lawmaker falsely pretending to be a member of the public who had witnessed the altercation. The email claimed Mitchell had called officers plebs. "A police officer posing as a member of the public and sending an email potentially to blacken the name of a cabinet minister is a very serious issue and does need to be seriously investigated," said Prime Minister David Cameron. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Obama wants 'real progress, right now'

Tough tone. President invokes 2nd-amendment freedoms and recent spate of killings in proactive address

U.S. President Barack Obama on Wednesday demanded "concrete proposals" on curbing gun violence that he could send to Congress no later than January — an urgent effort to build on the growing political consensus over gun restrictions following last week's massacre of children at a Connecticut school.

It was a tough new tone for the president, whose first four years were largely quiet on the issue amid widespread political reluctance to tackle a powerful gun-rights lobby. But emotions have been high after the gunman in Friday's shooting used a semi-automatic rifle to kill 20 young children and six adults at the school, after killing his mother at home.

"This time, the words need to lead to action," Obama said. He said he will push legislation "without delay" and urged Congress to hold votes on the bill next year.

"The fact that we can't prevent every act of violence doesn't mean we can't steadily reduce the violence," Obama said.

The policy process Obama was announcing Wednesday was expected to include input from the departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services. The Department of Homeland Security is also expected to play a key role. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No excuses

"The fact that this problem is complex can no longer be an excuse for doing nothing."
Barack Obama

Funeral processions continue in Newtown

Firefighters wait for a procession at the main intersection in the village of Newtown, Conn., on Wednesday, as they pay respects to Daniel Gerard Barden, one of the students killed during the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting. The small, quiet town has seen gridlock traffic caused by funeral processions, as well as the large number of national and international media covering the aftermath of the shooting. Barden, 7, was killed when the gunman, Adam Lanza, walked into the school last Friday and opened fire, killing 26 people, including 20 children, before killing himself.

JULIO CORTEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Going too far?

Bulletproof-backpack maker's sales up 300%

Parents reeling in the wake of the Connecticut school shooting are fuelling sales of armoured backpacks for children, as firearms enthusiasts stock up on assault rifles nationwide amid fears of imminent gun-control measures. At U.S. armour manufacturer Amendment II, sales of children backpacks and armoured inserts are up 300 per cent. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gun laws in Canada

Tories repeal gun-show rules

The Conservative government has repealed federal gun-show regulations on the advice of the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee.

The regulations would have required the sponsor of a gun show to notify police and the chief firearms officer of the province before an event, and to ensure the security and safety of the location and the guns. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Wartime massacre

U.S. seeks death penalty for soldier

The U.S. army said Wednesday it will seek the death penalty against a soldier accused of massacring 16 Afghan villagers — nine of them children — during pre-dawn raids in March.

Staff Sgt. Robert Bales faces premeditated-murder charges. The slaying drew such angry protests that the U.S. halted combat operations. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, 39.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Afghanistan

U.K. to withdraw 3,800 soldiers

Prime Minister David Cameron announced Wednesday that about 3,800 British troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by the end of 2013.

Around 5,000 will remain into 2014, Cameron told lawmakers. The announcement comes after a video call Tuesday between Cameron and U.S. President Barack Obama.

Cameron said the decision reflects increasing confidence in the Afghan National Security Forces. After 2014, some troops will stay on to return equipment and deal with logistics, but no details on numbers have been finalized, he said.

The withdrawal of British troops will start next April, according to Defence Secretary Philip Hammond.

Since 2001, 438 British personnel have died in Afghanistan. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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U.S. President Barack Obama's selection as Time's person of the year was announced Wednesday on NBC's Today show. Obama also took the honour in 2008 as president-elect. TIME MAGAZINE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barack Obama Time's person of the year — a second time

Going for three?
President takes the win as 'architect' of a new America

U.S. President Barack Obama has been named Time magazine's "person of the year" for 2012.

"We are in the midst of historic cultural and demographic changes, and Obama is both the symbol and in some ways the architect of this new America," Time editor Rick Stengel told NBC's Today show, where he announced the selection on Wednesday.

The short list for the honour included Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani teenager who was shot in the head for advocating for girls' education, as well as Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, Apple CEO Tim Cook and Italian physicist Fabiola Gianotti of CERN.

Obama also received the honour in 2008, when he was president-elect.

In an interview with Time, Obama said his re-election "may have been more satisfying a win than 2008."

"We've gone through a very difficult time," Obama told the magazine. "The American people have rightly been frustrated at the pace of change, and the economy is still struggling, and this president we elected is imperfect; and yet, despite all that, this is who we want to be." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Previous winners

Time's "person of the year" is the person or composite person who has most influenced culture and news during the past year, for good or for ill.

- **Last year,** Time honoured "the Protester," citing dissent across the Middle East that spread to Europe and the United States, saying the protesters reshaped global politics.
- **In 2010,** Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg received the honour.
- **Earlier winners** include Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, Bono and former U.S. president George W. Bush.

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†Pictures shown in frames sold separately. **TV bench offer excludes TV and media storage combinations, wall brackets and FRAMSTÅ series. © Inter IKEA Systems B.V. 2012.

How will you spend your last night on Earth?

"I wouldn't do anything differently. I just don't see the point. I'm not a crazy guy to begin with."
Evaan Kheraj, Vancouver

"I would probably spend it with my family and friends. I don't really know what else to say."
Diane Leng, Calgary

"I can't say what I'd really do because it's not appropriate to print in a newspaper."
Luke Kellener, Fernie, B.C./Perth, Ont.

"I'm a space fan, so I would like to ... look up at the outer world with (my son) one last time."
Barry Obondo, Edmonton

"I would get a plane to Australia .... though I probably wouldn't get there in 24 hours."
Elaine Fitzpatrick, Saskatoon

"I would live it up with all my friends and family and I wouldn't even think about tomorrow."
Jaci Youngson, Regina

Doom awaits us — later

2012 prophecy. The world won't end on Dec. 21, experts say, but there are plenty of ways Earth could go

KIERON MONKS
Metro World News in London

It was fun while it lasted, but it seems the world is ending. A growing clamour, based on the Mayan calendar, insists that Dec. 21, 2012, will mark the death of humanity. Even NASA has received thousands of terrified messages from the public.

But the calendar has been misinterpreted, say experts, who claim the "end" refers only to the end of a cycle. The Mayan calendar is split into 394-year "baktuns," and 2012 will see a new era.

"The 13th Baktun will end on Dec. 21, and another will start," says Ines Valera-Silva, a researcher in Mayan studies at Loughborough University in the U.K. "That's all. A catastrophe has never been predicted."

Mayans today have stopped using the old calendar, Valera-Silva adds. "There is no reason to interpret this as a prophecy, but obviously some people are excited by it."

Who'll look the fool if Earth does end? Worshippers gather at Kukulkan temple at Chichén Itzá, Mexico. CUARTOSCURO

Hollywood movies and social media have driven the debate on exactly how the world will end. One Facebook page with 13,000 fans suggests it will come from a cosmic event.

"The biggest threat is a comet impact," says Benny Peiser, catastrophe specialist and founder of climate policy network CCNet. "It happens every few million years and could happen at any time. Astronomers are scanning the sky for potential risks, and we need to solve the problem for good by developing the technology to deflect asteroids."

More speculators believe a black hole will open and swallow us all. The fear led to widespread criticism of scientists working on the Large Hadron Collider, rumoured to be capable of producing a black hole.

Humankind may not need cosmic forces to bring down Armageddon. The Cold War may be over, but the number of nuclear nations has grown swiftly — and with it, the risk of a "final war."

"It's no secret how to make the weapons and it's not hard to think of people crazy enough to use them," says Alan Robock, environmental scientist at Rutgers University and author of Nuclear Winter Revisited.

Threat of terrorism aside, Robock sees a risk in regional feuds between nuclear powers India and Pakistan or Israel and Iran.

Environmentalists point to rising sea levels and the threat of a supervolcano, while nanotechnology may yet produce microorganisms that kill us from the inside.

The endless possibilities explain the interest in bookmaker William Hill's offer of 1,000,000-to-1 on the world ending.

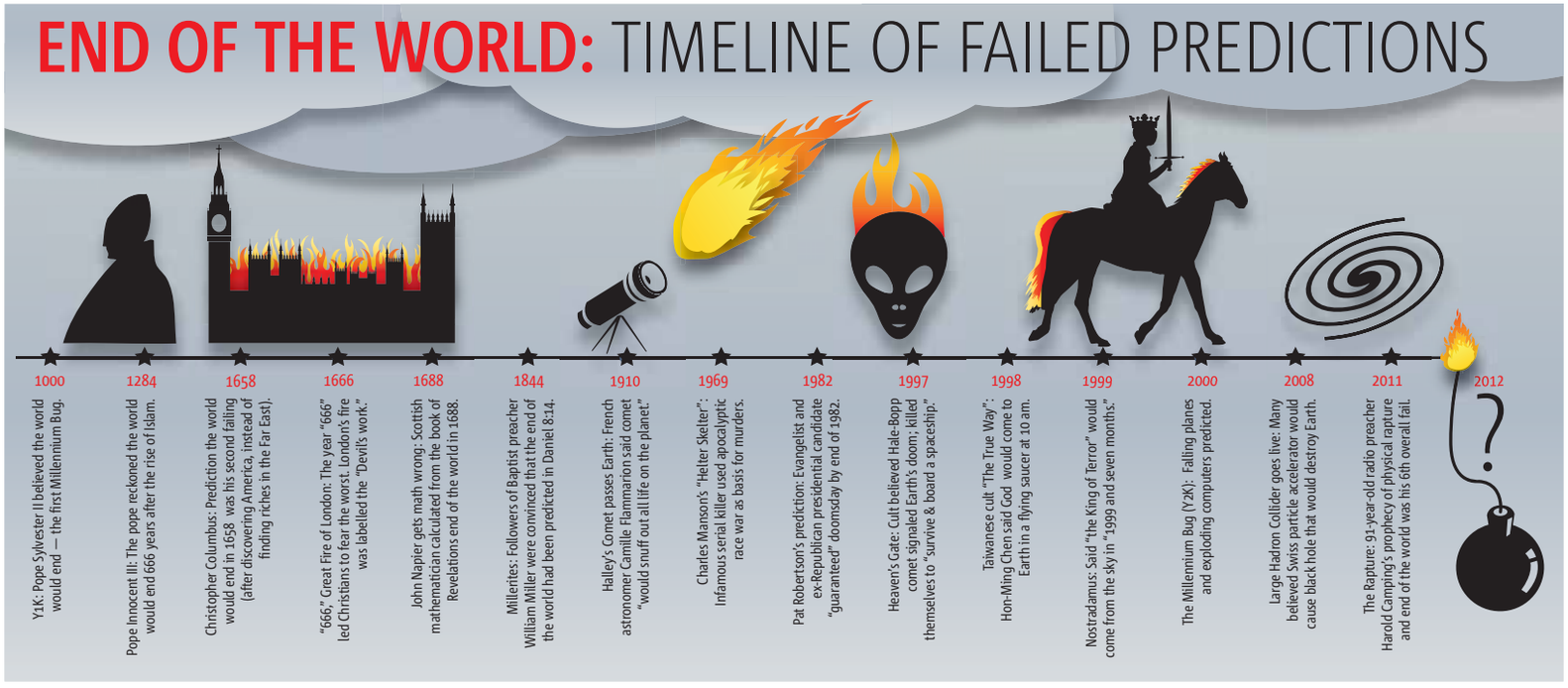
"Some may say it is a bet we can never lose, for the obvious reason that we won't be here to pay out should it happen," spokesman Graham Sharpe says, but several bets have already been placed.

Apocalypse options

- **Comet strike.** Still the most immediate threat; likely to be sudden. **Fear factor: 7/10**
- **Nuclear war.** An ever-present threat and probably more likely than world peace. **FF: 6/10**
- **Global warming.** The rising sea is already threatening some islands. **FF: 4/10**
- **Disease pandemic.** Could happen but unlikely to catch us by surprise. **FF: 2/10**
- **Sun burnout.** A sure thing but will be in 4.5 billion years' time. **FF: 0/10**

Bedtime reading: This Mayan manuscript suggests an end to a calendar cycle. GETTY IMAGES

END OF THE WORLD: TIMELINE OF FAILED PREDICTIONS


1000
Y1K: Pope Sylvester II believed the world would end — the first Millennium Bug.
1284
Pope Innocent III: The pope reckoned the world would end 666 years after the rise of Islam.
1658
Christopher Columbus: Prediction the world would end in 1658 was his second failing (after discovering America, instead of finding riches in the Far East).
1666
"666," Great Fire of London: The year "666" led Christians to fear the worst. London's fire was labelled the "Devil's work."
1688
John Napier gets math wrong: Scottish mathematician calculated from the book of Revelations end of the world in 1688.
1844
Millerites: Followers of Baptist preacher William Miller were convinced that the end of the world had been predicted in Daniel 8:14.
1910
Halley's Comet passes Earth: French astronomer Camille Flammarion said comet "would snuff out all life on the planet."
1969
Charles Manson's "Helter Skelter": Infamous serial killer used apocalyptic race war as basis for murders.
1982
Pat Robertson's prediction: Evangelist and ex-Republican presidential candidate "guaranteed" doomsday by end of 1982.
1997
Heaven's Gate: Cult believed Hale-Bopp comet signaled Earth's doom; killed themselves to "survive & board a spaceship."
1998
Taiwanese cult "The True Way": Hon-Ming Chen said God would come to Earth in a flying saucer at 10 am.
1999
Nostradamus: Said "the King of Terror" would come from the sky in "1999 and seven months."
2000
The Millennium Bug (Y2K): Falling planes and exploding computers predicted.
2008
Large Hadron Collider goes live: Many believed Swiss particle accelerator would cause black hole that would destroy Earth.
2011
The Rapture: 91-year-old radio preacher Harold Camping's prophecy of physical rapture and end of the world was his 6th overall fail.
2012
?

"Disney World.... Where else would you rather be but the happiest place on Earth?"

Chris Hancock, Winnipeg

"I already live every day like it's the last. So, (I'd) just carry on. I don't make future plans."

Andrew Goddard, London, Ont.

"Blissfully ignorant that it is the last day on Earth. I just would not want to be aware."

Candice McCavitt, Toronto

"I would make a list of everyone in my life that I had something important to say to."

Kirk Raybould, Toronto

"I would break all the laws, all the rules. No drugs, no alcohol: It's not something you need at the end."

Fred Labonte, Ottawa

"I'd probably buy unlimited sushi ... drink a lot and not worry about the hangover the next day."

Leanne Stevens, Halifax

ERIKA PADRÓN
Metro World News in Mexico

DECEMBER 21 MAKES MAYANS LAUGH

Native Mayan José Natividad Ic Xec tells Metro the calendar's end has nothing to do with the world's end

José Natividad Ic Xec, a native Mayan living in Mérida, capital of Yucatán in Mexico, where the Mayan civilization once thrived, has dedicated his life to promoting his culture and tradition. Xec explains what the doomsday prophecy really means for his compatriots.

What does Dec. 21 mean to the Mayan people?
For Mayans living in Yucatán, this date means nothing. Like anyone else, we spend that day thinking about what we are going to eat, about our jobs or what the next few months will be like for us. This date was only conceived as a stage in a calendar, as Dec. 22 marks the end of 13 baktuns, (a baktun is a period of 394 years or 144,000 days). And so it's just the end of an era in a calendar.

So the end-of-the-world prophecy is all fantasy?
People speak of a revolution in human consciousness, a new light that will shine upon the world. Believers talk of some kind of transformation and will gather at the Mayan pyramids to perform some kind of ritual. But all of this is not attributed to the Maya; we really don't care about it — on the contrary, it makes us laugh. Our people know little about the ancient Mayan Long Count calendar. The only thing we know is that the date Dec. 22 marks an end in the calendar, but people are using the date Dec. 21 because it is the solstice and thus a more memorable date.

Then why is the date such a big deal?
Experts claim that the 13th baktun is a good opportunity for people to make a profit out of those who believe. And if those faithful genuinely believe in it, they would be frightened; they would look for a bunker or think about a plan of survival. So this end-of-the-world talk is only a bit of fun.

You use social networks to promote your culture. How popular is Chilam Balam (Xec's blog based on the Mayan document allegedly containing prophecies)?
It's a concept that I started two years ago, first on Twitter and Facebook, then on a blog, which I hope will continue to grow. On my website, I publish stories on Mayan culture and its characteristics.

Do you yourself have any plans to mark the Mayan event?
Yes, on Dec. 21 and 22, I will be doing live broadcasts from (ancient Mayan site) Chichén Itzá. I will be chatting to Mayans who live in the area. I want them to tell me about how they live. Perhaps they will perform some traditional dancing. I will also talk to other experts like myself who have worked their whole lives to promote Mayan culture. But for all this to happen, I need sponsors. But I'm aware that our old indigenous culture is not a big seller.

José Natividad Ic Xec

- **Age:** 49
- **Born:** Peto, a Mayan village in Yucatán.
- **Background:** Parents were Mayan speakers; grew up speaking Mayan and later learned Spanish; at the end of secondary school moved to Mérida, where he currently resides; worked at the Diario de Yucatán newspaper for 17 years; also studied at the Seminario Conciliar de Yucatán.

Doomsday industry still booming despite the lessons of the past

Are you done your apocalypse shopping yet? You could throw down $30,000 on a space in a luxury underground bunker or a cheaper "survival kit" that can help you eat grass. Apocalypse literature is booming, with sales from the Left Behind book series worth almost $1 billion.

It's a modern update of the paper "pardons" sold as insurance against judgment day in the Middle Ages. Many experts trace the birth of the apocalypse industry to the U.S. Millerite movement, when preacher William Miller launched a campaign to promote his vision of doomsday in the 1840s.

"Systematic commercialization first arose from fear of nuclear war in the 1960s, with companies building bomb shelters," says Lorne Dawson, sociologist and author of Prophetic Failure and Millennial Movements. "That showed the business opportunity, and it continued with the survivalist movement of the 1970s and the growing fear of an eco-catastrophe."

Doomsday plan: Dress up like a Mayan and party hard. CONTRIBUTED

The years 2000 and 2012 have revived the focus, and Dawson believes it taps into a basic human desire. "Simple psychology shows that people need to believe they do not live in chaos, that there is a higher purpose."

Doom preaching has drawn backlash following cases such as the 2011 suicide of British teenager Isabel Taylor. "It's an industry that exploits anxiety and can be dangerous," says Bill Hudson, astronomer and editor of the 2012hoax blog.

Even if 2012 passes without incident, don't expect the industry to stop. "Even when a theory is debunked, a core group tends to become even more fervent," says Hudson. "True believers are locked in. You can't reason someone out of a position they didn't reason themselves into."

KIERON MONKS/MWN IN LONDON, U.K.

Mexico. Prophecy injects billions into economy

It may be the end of the world, but certainly not for Mexico's economy. The Mayan prophecy will have attracted more than $15 billion in tourist revenue by the end of 2012 as millions flock to the country to discover its indigenous civilization.

Mexico's Ministry of Tourism predicts 52 million visitors will have come to Mexico by the end of 2012, many of whom will have visited the Mundo Maya (Quintana Roo, Yucatan and Campeche states).

"Today we are the 10th power for tourism in the world and we are working hard to be in the top five," outgoing President Felipe Calderon said.

Mexico put aside $10 million for a 2012 project last summer.

AGUSTÍN VELASCO/MWN IN MEXICO

Party like a Mayan

More than 500 Mayan-themed events will have taken place by the end of the year.

- **Festival Mundo Maya.** Folk festival that celebrates Mayan traditions in the Mexican city of Campeche until Dec. 30.
- **The Gran Museo del Mundo Maya.** Located in Merida, Yucatan's capital, the museum holds precious Mayan artifacts.
- **The End of the Long Count Mayan Calendar.** The 365-step pyramid of Chichén Itzá will host a ceremonial event on Dec. 21.

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Philanthropy. Zuckerberg donates $500M in stock

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said he is giving nearly $500 million US in stock to a Silicon Valley charity with the aim of funding health and education issues.

Zuckerberg donated 18 million Facebook shares, valued at $498.8 million US based on their Tuesday closing price. The beneficiary is the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, a nonprofit that works with donors to allocate their gifts.

This is Zuckerberg's largest donation to date. He pledged $100 million US in Facebook stock to Newark, N.J., public schools in 2010, before his company went public earlier this year.

In a Facebook post Tuesday, Zuckerberg, 28, said he's "proud of the work" done by the foundation that his Newark donation launched, called Startup: Education, which has helped open charter schools, high schools and others.

With the latest contribution, he added, "we will look for areas in education and health to focus on next." He did not give further details on what plans there may be for funds. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Giving Pledge

- In 2010, Zuckerberg joined Giving Pledge, an effort led by Microsoft Corp. founder Bill Gates and Berkshire Hathaway Inc. CEO Warren Buffett to get the richest people in the U.S. to donate most of their wealth. His wife, Priscilla Chan, joined with him.

Market Minute

DOLLAR 101.20¢ (-0.25¢)

TSX 12,403.63 (+69.29)

OIL $89.98 US (+$1.58)

GOLD $1,667.70 US (-$3)

Natural gas: $3.32 (-10¢)
Dow Jones: 13,251.97 (-98.99)

Penny's end to cost a mint

Chump change. New analysis shows price tag for redeeming one-cent coins in circulation will be about $7.3M yearly

Jeff Golby wears an oversized model of a penny on his head as he collects donations of one-cent coins for charity during this past summer's Canada Day festivities in Vancouver. The federal government is phasing out use of the Canadian penny, and the last one was minted this past May. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

The demise of Canada's one-cent coin next year will save taxpayers less than expected.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced the impending withdrawal of the penny in last March's budget, saying the government would save $11 million a year in production costs.

That's because production of each one-cent coin had cost the Royal Canadian Mint about 1.6 cents. But a new analysis of costs shows that redeeming the mountain of circulating pennies beginning Feb. 4 will cost taxpayers about $7.3 million a year.

The analysis projects a net cost of about $38.3 million to redeem some six billion pennies expected to be turned in by consumers and financial institutions over the next six years.

Costs include $53 million expected to be paid out to redeem the face value of the coins, as well as another $27 million in handling and administration costs by the Royal Canadian Mint.

Recycling the zinc and copper from melted-down pennies will bring in about $42.5 million in revenue, leaving government in the red at slightly more than $38 million.

However, adding the $11 million in annual savings from not minting any more pennies, which ceased production May 4 this year, still gives the government annual savings of almost $4 million over the expected six-year redemption period.

As the coins are withdrawn, cash transactions will begin to be rounded off to the nearest five cents, but there are no government-imposed rules or policing. Electronic transactions, such as those on debit cards or credit cards would still be registered in cents. THE CANADIAN PRESS

By the numbers

35B

Over the last century, the Royal Canadian Mint has stamped an estimated 35 billion pennies from metal plates. The penny remains legal tender even after Feb. 4.

GM will spend $5.5B to buy back shares from U.S. government

In this 2010 file photo, General Motors Co. CEO Daniel Akerson poses in front of the New York Stock Exchange following GM's initial public offering. On Wednesday, the U.S. government said it will sell its remaining stake in General Motors in the next year or so. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

The U.S. Treasury plans to sell its remaining stake in General Motors over the next 15 months, allowing the automaker to shed the stigma of being partly owned by the American government.

GM said Wednesday it will spend $5.5 billion US to buy back 200 million shares of its stock from the Treasury by the end of this year.

And the U.S. government, unlike its Canadian counterpart, has promised to sell its remaining 300 million shares on the open market starting in January and get out of the company's business within the next 12 to 15 months.

The deal almost certainly means that Washington will lose billions on the $49.5-billion US bailout that saved GM from being auctioned off in pieces during the financial crisis in 2008 and 2009. GM's buyback will cut the Treasury's stake to 19 per cent from 26.5 per cent.

For it to break even, the Treasury would have to sell the remaining 300 million shares for an average of about $70 US.

Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty referred to that discrepancy almost three weeks ago when he said that now was not the right time for the Canadian government to sell its stake in the company. On Wednesday he reaffirmed that position. "We will not sell the shares without getting the best value we can for Canadian taxpayers," Flaherty said.

"Secondly ... we are a Conservative government. We're not interested in the long term in being shareholders in private corporations, including publicly traded private businesses. Over time we do intent to divest. On timing, I'll have to get back to you."

Ottawa and Ontario contributed $13.7 billion to help bail out North American automakers GM and Chrysler more than three years ago and own about nine per cent of GM's common shares. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"This is fundamentally good for the business."

GM Chief Financial Officer Dan Ammann, who said the company has market research showing government ownership has held down sales of its cars and trucks

Holiday giving

Donations are better than gifts, majority say

A new study suggests almost two-thirds of Canadian adults would rather see a donation to charity on their behalf rather than receive a gift this holiday season. The poll for BMO Harris Private Banking also found that 78 per cent of respondents would consider making that charitable donation rather than giving a traditional gift. The findings are based on two surveys conducted for the bank by Pollara. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Oshawa, Ont.

GM shifts Camaro production to Michigan

General Motors is moving production of the next version of its Camaro sports car from its Oshawa operation in Ontario to a plant in Michigan, a move the union says will cost 1,000 jobs at the massive factory east of Toronto. The Canadian Auto Workers estimated the move, which could also affect parts companies, could cost as many as 9,000 jobs in the region after all the spinoff effects are included. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Safety concerns

Hyundai recalls Velosters over brakes, sunroofs

Hyundai is recalling thousands of late-model Velosters in the U.S. and Canada to fix problems involving parking brakes on some models and a sunroof that can shatter and cause injuries on others. The recall involving the sunroof affects cars from the 2012 model year, including 1,593 in Canada. The separate recall to fix parking brakes affects about 1,565 vehicles in Canada. THE CANADIAN PRESS

"With the holidays coming up I can send pictures, email or text my family, even if they are not in my city, which keeps me connected."

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VEGAS: WHAT HAPPENS HERE IS WRITTEN IN A COLUMN

HE SAYS...
John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

Greetings, world travellers! The U.S. may have a Bible Belt to hold up the britches of the nation, but this week we look at Las Vegas, the city where pants are optional.

This luminous postage stamp in the middle of desert darkness is home to the American stereotype in all its glory. I have enough American friends to know the obvious — that the U.S. is incredibly diverse — but here in Vegas I'm surrounded by large boobs (not literally), large food (I had a crab cake with the same size and heft of a curling stone) and large cars (my "compact" rental could comfortably seat a starting hockey lineup wearing its gear).

After four days here, I have compiled this exhaustive, 350-word guide to Sin City, which contains oodles of useful information for your trip to Las Vegas. (LEGAL DISCLAIMER: This column contains no useful information about anything.)

Las Vegas 101

Las Vegas, literally "Lots of Neon," was founded by itinerant escorts and slot-machine builders in the 1930s, who dreamed of a new America where all the worst jobs in the country could be concentrated in one place. Here you'll find tens of thousands of service workers who must put up with customers in a perpetual "Listen here, friend" state of 1-a.m. drunkenness, and the servers do it all with a smile — a tight, painful smile. You will pity tip more than you ever have in your entire life.

Fortunately, you'll have plenty of opportunities to distract yourself. For instance, while newspaper boxes lie empty in much of the United States, Vegas does a booming media trade with such well-respected publications as Barely Legal, College Girls! and Alt. Who Says Print is Dead?

And did you know that in Las Vegas it's legal to gamble? The only rule is that the gambling must take place in a one-third replica of some other place on Earth.

The casino resorts include:

- The Venetian, which has an exact replica of the Venice canals, right down to the neon-rimmed gondolas, the ice-skating rink and the country-western band playing covers on the hour. Viva Italia!
- New York, New York, which for just $5 extra will give you a one-third mugging.
- The Bellagio, famous for its fountains, which are a replica of the Eastern European country Bellagistan and its three-times-bigger fountains.
- One shopping mall also looks like a (really) cheap one-third knock-off of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, so presumably there'll soon be a really earnest but widely disliked resort here soon with the slogan "A World-Class Casino ... Aren't We?"

Vegas could be tempting to dismiss as low-rent or vulgar, but unlike many other cities, it knows exactly what it is. And if you don't like it, well, nobody told you to travel to the middle of the desert.

The city also has many bars and whatnot, but I don't want to get into that because of space restrictions and just in case I ever want to run for U.S. Congress. Mistakes were made. We'll leave it at that.

Because, as the man said, you got to know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, and know when to run. (That man, of course, was a one-third replica of Kenny Rogers.)

A sign of the times in Las Vegas. JOHN MAZEROLLE/FOR METRO

Takes an eagle eye to spot a hoax

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Class project

World fooled by Montreal video

Relax, world — your baby won't get snatched by an eagle if you visit Montreal.

An online video of the massive bird plucking an infant off the ground has been acknowledged by its creators as a fake.

The admission comes after the video, produced by students at a new-media training school in Montreal, was viewed millions of times Wednesday on YouTube and was the subject of news reports in Canada and internationally. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Other pranks

With the Internet in shock over the eagle/toddler hoax, Metro decided to revisit some other online video spoofs of the past.

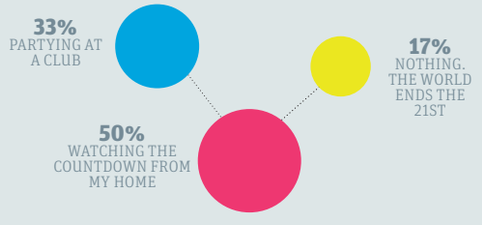
- **Lonelygirl15.** This was an early online video blog depicting the life of a fictional teenager named Bree Avery. The series followed the typical angst-ridden teenager whose confessional videos covered things like her favourite stuffed animals or her first kiss. Over time, the show evolved to include a cult and the mysterious disappearance of Bree's parents. In the fall of 2006, fans of the show discovered that Bree was actually a 19-year-old actress named Jessica Rose, and the show was revealed to be fake.
- **Dating site eHarmony cat lady.** A woman named Debbie tearfully confessed her love of felines in what appeared to be a dating- site biography. The site released a statement afterward admitting it was a hoax.
- **Onion iPod charger.** A video purportedly showed a man charging his iPod using an onion and some Gatorade. It also garnered a lot of press when frustrated Apple enthusiasts plugged their devices into various vegetables.
- **Microsoft 'viral marketing' slip and slide.** A video shows a man rocketing down a giant water slide before flying off a ramp at the end and landing in a small wading pool. The video was created using a stuntman and computer animation, and was eventually revealed to be part of a marketing campaign for Microsoft Office.

Watch these videos and more at metronews.ca.

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

What will you be doing for New Year's?



Twitter

@Ahmed36022:
A good friend is someone who care about you they are someone who will be there when you're down

@charlotte_fleet:
Ugh I love Sam from lord of the rings he is such a good friend #poorguy golem is a little s--t

@GongshowGear:
If you're tweeting the locations of RIDE programs who are trying to keep drunk drivers off the roads you're a major douche bag

@DeannaEliza:
You know what the best part about running to catch the bus? Is When a bunch of people watch you miss it.

@ottpak:
I'm feeling the crunch of #Christmas as I feel like I haven't shopped yet I have. Plenty of time right?

metro
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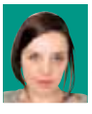
Project Mars hopes the momentum they've gathered in 2012 will carry over to 2013. HANDOUT

Rockers in Project Mars Don't Hold Back with EP

Long time coming.
Band with roots dating back to 2005 adds new member, rethinks writing and comes back with recording



BACKSTAGE PASS
Jen Traplin
ottawa@metronews.ca

After years of lineup changes and reshaping their sound, Ottawa anthem rockers Project Mars have released the band's debut EP, Don't Hold Back.

The band's roots date back to 2005, when on-the-job banter between co-workers at a restaurant spurred the creation of progressive rock band Sound Addiction, which eventually evolved into the four-piece Project Mars.

Two years later, the band was starting to gain a bit of steam locally.

"We were gigging all over Ottawa and the surrounding region," says drummer Mars Juarez.

In 2009, the guys decided to take a break before resurrecting and reinventing Project Mars after a year-long hiatus.

"We brought in an extra guitarist/vocalist to add a little bit more of a dynamic to the sound to give us a bigger sound, therefore, we had a bigger stage presence," Juarez explains.

In October, Project Mars released its debut EP.

"In the past, we just had demos.

"We were just trying to find our way and get the door open.

"When we started back up in 2010, musically, we kind of started from scratch.

"We rethought our writing process and the way we went about it.

"We were aiming for more marketable music."

The EP's title track, Don't Hold Back, is an ode to the band's original bass player and founding member, Jordan Elliott, who left the group to join the Canadian Armed Forces.

Juarez says the song is a bit of a glimpse into what it's like to be a soldier.

"We don't pretend to know what it's like, but we tried to place ourselves in their shoes for a short period of time.

"We all have our troops in our hearts.

"Their sacrifice lets us do what we do and our way of giving thanks was to write this track with him in our hearts and it goes out to all of the Canadian troops," he explains.

The band is hoping the momentum they gained this year will carry over into 2013 — they are planning on recording another album, maybe even a full-length one, followed by a cross-country tour.

And they also hope to continue their work with the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada and other charities.

"2012 was a really good year for us, musically," says Juarez.

"The boys are all pushing in the same direction now, so if we can match this year or beyond, that would be great for us," he adds.

Buy it

To purchase a physical copy or digital download of Don't Hold Back, visit projectmars.bandcamp.com.

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Internet backlash. The fantastic Mr. Jamie Foxx responds to his critics

The Internet is stupid, according to Jamie Foxx. When asked about criticism regarding his new film, Django Unchained, the star is adamant about the fact the online naysayers — who have been critical of the film's frequent use of the N word by both black and white characters — are irrelevant. As long as Oprah approves, everything's basically OK.

"When Oprah saw it, we were like ..." Foxx gives us a terrified stare. "She was like, 'I loved it. It was hard to watch in some spots. I cannot believe I was laughing in some spots at some of these things because you know me, I'm super-black woman.' I'm paraphrasing."

Even director of the film, Quentin Tarantino, found himself susceptible to the online criticism about the film, according to Foxx.

"A couple friends of mine, entertainers, read so much of it until they shut down," Foxx says. "Even Quentin calls me, says, 'Man.' I'm like, 'What? Who gives a f—k. They're on the Internet.' The Internet to me is nothing."

Django Unchained has received criticism for its violent scenes. HANDOUT

Foxx has an explanation for all the ire, for his movie and on the Internet in general.

"What it comes down to is what I call subliminal jealousy," he says. "A lot of people aren't artists. A lot of people aren't special, so all they can do is stand on the outside and just say the loudest, craziest, zaniest sh— in the world. I actually laugh at most of the stuff, but that's all it is."

But the film about a freed slave who becomes a bounty hunter is receiving an equal amount of praise for its unflinchingly violent portrayal of life in the South, just two years before the Civil War. While the brutality is graphic, in a marked contrast, there are plenty of hilarious moments. It's the kind of juxtaposition that is the hallmark of a Tarantino film.

"(Kerry Washington's and my) character were more the grounded characters and then all of these funny things that happen around them, which I think is so necessary, because it gave people some relief," Foxx says.

HEIDI PATALANO/METRO WORLD NEWS

Quoted

"What it comes down to is what I call subliminal jealousy."

Jamie Foxx
Django Unchained star

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Director Quentin Tarantino made a conscious effort to drop some violence from his recent film. HANDOUT

Tarantino Unchained on Django emotions

New movie. Director talks about how he scaled back parts of his new movie despite wanting to take it further than he ended up doing

Rated R

"I could handle a rougher version of the movie than what exists right now. I have more of a tolerance for it."

Quentin Tarantino

LIZ BROWN
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Django Unchained is a movie so brutal, it brought Quentin Tarantino to tears.

In Toronto earlier this month for the Canadian premiere, he recounted how he broke down during an intense scene where a couple of sadistic slave owners whip Broomhilda (played by Kerry Washington), the wife of the film's hero Django.

"I was operating the camera on one of those scenes and (Washington) got to me. The next thing you know I was completely blind because my eyepiece was filling up with tears," he says.

But it was more the context of the brutality than the bloody assault that yanked at Tarantino's emotions.

"That was a rough scene," he admits. "Where we were doing it, when you see that scene, you will see shacks behind her and those were the actual slave quarters where the slaves lived on those plantations. There is blood in that grass and flesh in those trees and we felt the ancestors who once walked there," he says.

The Django Unchained that audiences will view when it heads to theatres on Dec. 25 is a toned-down version of the film Tarantino originally offered the American ratings juggernaut MPAA.

"They actually gave an R rating to a rougher version than I ultimately ended up presenting to the public," he says.

It was the director himself who made the call to chill on the violence — even though the gore remains trademark Tarantino and there are plenty of scenes that will churn the stomachs of the strongest viewers.

"I could handle a rougher version of the movie than what exists right now. I have more of a tolerance for it, but I kind of realized that when I watched that version of the movie with audiences, that I was traumatizing them too much. It's just that f—king simple. And I want people to enjoy the movie at the very end of it."

Clocking in at just under three hours, there's plenty to enjoy in Tarantino's take on the spaghetti western and his homage to Italian director Sergio Corbucci, the man behind the original Django. The film follows Django (Jamie Foxx), a slave-turned-bounty hunter on his quest to free his wife from the evil plantation owner Calvin Candie (Leonardo DiCaprio).

Set in the pre-Civil War South, Tarantino peppers his dialogue with the N word, substitutes literary references for his typical pop culture banter and offers his heroes lots of moral grey areas in which to roam.

"I wasn't so much trying to get a message across (about slavery) as paint a very realistic picture of what America was like at that time and create a world where slavery is the norm," he says.

"Rather than make some soapbox speeches about it, or make points against America, I just wanted to ... take you back to that time and stick you in the middle of it."

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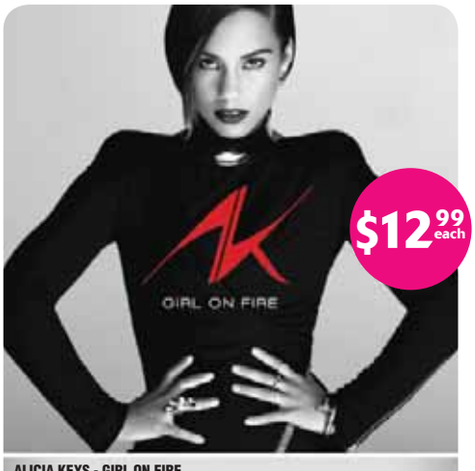

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Kristen Stewart ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

K-Stew's sorry for her cheatin' heart

Kristen Stewart knows she's upset more than a few fans over the course of her Twilight tenure — especially since her summer cheating scandal. "I apologize to everyone for making them so angry. It was not my intention," the actress tells Newsweek. "It's not a terrible thing if you're either loved or hated. But honestly, I don't care because it doesn't keep me from doing my s—." And as for the hugely successful vampire franchise coming to an end? "The only relief when it comes to Twilight is that the story is done," she admits.

Angelina Jolie

Angelina Jolie dusts off her director's hat

Angelina Jolie is set to return to the director's chair, choosing to adapt Laura Hillenbrand's Second World War survival story, Unbroken, as her second film, according to E! News. The story follows Louis Zamperini, an air force pilot who survived a crash and spent most of the war in a Japanese prison camp. "I read Laura Hillenbrand's brilliant book and I was so moved by Louis Zamperini's heroic story, I immediately began to fight for the opportunity to make this film," Jolie says. Her directorial debut, In the Land of Blood and Honey, focused on the Bosnian war.

The Word

The year of the lost locks — femmes who took it all off

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

No more long locks for these ladies. Whether it was for a role of a lifetime or to bring awareness to a cause, here are some haircuts that turned heads this year.

Who: Anne Hathaway
Why: The actress had to shave her head for her role as the prostitute Fantine in Les Misérables.
Current length: Short. "I love the short-haired lifestyle," Hathaway says in the December issue of Vogue. "I'm turning 30, and — I hope this isn't obnoxious to say — I feel prettier, and much more myself. I guess I just feel much more satisfied with less now."

Who: Charlize Theron
Why: Theron's shaved head is courtesy of her latest film role, Mad Max: Fury Road.
Current length: Still shaved.

Who: Kellie Pickler
Why: The American Idol singer got a buzz cut to support her best friend, Summer Miller, who had to undergo chemotherapy while being treated for breast cancer.
Current length: Growing out a tad. "We made a pact from the get-go that we would shave our heads together," Pickler told E! Online about sharing the look with her best pal. "And we did."

Who: Miley Cyrus
Why: Who knows. Probably because she's aching to be seen as more "edgy" than her Disney roots.
Current length: It's not so much talking about length as it is talking about the crazy. As she wrote on Twitter when she originally lost the locks, "Never felt more me in my whole life."

Kate Middleton

Kate Middleton determined to make the Royal Christmas

Despite her recent pregnancy-related hospitalization, Kate Middleton is vowing to put on a brave face for the Royal Family's Christmas dinner, according to Radar Online. "Kate doesn't want to disappoint the Queen, nor does she want to skip on her duties," a source says.

"She feels she is obliged to appear at the annual Christmas dinner and doesn't want to let anyone down." Her husband, though, is offering an out. "William has his concerns though that she won't be up to it, and told Kate she shouldn't worry if she feels too sick to attend and that no one will judge her negatively," the source adds. "But Kate isn't having it and is determined to be at the dinner, smiling as always."

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The Carly Rae kiss

The Call Me Maybe singer breaks down the craft of the smudge-free make-out, her Ryan Gosling crush and why she'd never play spin the bottle with Justin Bieber

ROMINA McGUINNESS
life@metronews.ca

As she promotes her new album, Kiss, we asked Carly Rae Jepsen about makeup application and the art of making out, because we figured she must be an expert at it by now.

Putting the makeup on...
"For a press event, I need one hour for my hair and makeup. But if it's just for me, I literally need 10 minutes. My grooming process has become shorter and shorter in my off-days. I like getting glammed up for the red carpet, but then being able to wear no makeup and be in flannel for a camping weekend. I'm like, 'Take me as I am.'"

The spin the bottle test. Ryan Gosling — yay or nay?
"I've always had a thing for Ryan Gosling. I don't think

I'm alone in that! There's not one movie of his that I haven't liked. It's his personality. I've never met him, but the characters he plays are very charming."

And Justin Bieber?
"He's my friend, that would be too strange. We would never play that game together!"

On making out
"I've always had fairly pleasant experiences, but not, like, a lot of them! Kissing is all about how you feel about the person. If you have no chemistry, it can be totally meaningless. But if you have the right amount of flare, then it can be a really magical moment. I don't know if I'm a good kisser. I hope so."

Video

Watch Carly Rae Jepsen give a tutorial on how to kiss without smudging your lipstick on metronews.ca

Inside her makeup bag

Carly Rae Jepsen opens up her purse to show us two products she can't get through the day without

MAC Lipstick in Lady Danger

"I'm obsessed with this. It's a statement piece. It's kind of like an orangey red, but the perfect shade of it. It's a good pick-me-up if you have to get dolled up fast."

Marc Jacobs Daisy Eau de Parfum

"I'm really picky with scents. I can get sick of them after a day or two. Daisy has been one that I've really hung on to. It's not too domineering, really pleasant and kind of subtle. It feels really fresh every time I spray it on."

Holiday party skin savers

These are two products to turn to when the party starts showing up on your face

KENYA HUNT
life@metronews.ca

La Prairie Advanced Marine Biology Day Cream SPF 20

$135, laprairie.com.
Grab this potent face cream to recover from all of that dehydrating holiday drinking.

Lancôme Visionnaire Advanced Skin Corrector

$60, lancome.com.
This is the serum to fill out those forehead creases that pop up after too many nights spent squinting in dark clubs.

The Kit

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Vancouver

Ann Nguyen

Sales manager at Lynn Steven

Age: 31

What she's wearing
Aritzia toque, Oak + Fort coat, Wilfred Free T-shirt, Rachel Comey shoes

Her inspiration
"I'm constantly in a creative state of mind, so I like clothes that are comfortable, functional and at the same time, an outfit that moves with me.

THE KIT PHOTOBLOGGER: M'C KENNETH LICON, LITTLEFASHIONISTO.COM

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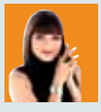

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@MaryamRitzy
awesomeee!

@BeeLeeMon
@torontopearson that's amazing!!!!!! Wish I was traveling now.

@misstraceynolan
@torontopearson That is very cool!

@mavicanada
that's so fun and festive!

@Jeanne_Beker: Canadian glamour!! Krystal Koo co-chair of Sparkle, Ronald McDonald fund-raiser, in @PavoniOfficial

@Jeanne_Beker: On my way to @CTVCanadaAM to judge gingerbread houses! What makes a GOOD gingerbread house?

@BeeLeeMon
Imperfection! :)

@Jeanne_Beker: Face Time @theloopca @BeckermanBlog @TonyChapman + @ssheffman @ shopeluxe Talking online shopping!

@Jeanne_Beker: With Frank Toskan, founder of @MACcosmetics at the Ronald McDonald House fund-raiser at The Carlu

A Very Matthew Williamson Christmas

Gift guide. 2012 was a big year for the designer who celebrated the 15th anniversary of his eponymous line. He tells us how he plans to reflect on it all during the holidays.

KENYA HUNT
life@metronews.ca

"I'm a huge fan of a traditional Christmas dinner," says Matthew Williamson. He usually spends the holiday at his parents' house in Manchester, England, where he'll be headed in a week.

"There'll be some big family meals, walks and games," he explains. But his fantasy Christmas looks more like an episode of Downton Abbey with some old Bob Hope specials mixed in.

"(My dream Christmas) would be cooked by mum, of course — a turkey with all the trimmings. My family, all of my closest friends and their children would be there. We'd be in the grand dining room at Aynhoe Park, which is this stately home in Oxfordshire, with a roaring fire going and deer in the snow outside the window," he adds. "Perhaps Bing Crosby or Frank Sinatra would drop by for a song or two. Ok, I'm getting a little carried away now." He fills us in on what he plans to give — and hopes to receive — this month.

The Top 3 things he's hoping for...

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thomsweeney.co.uk

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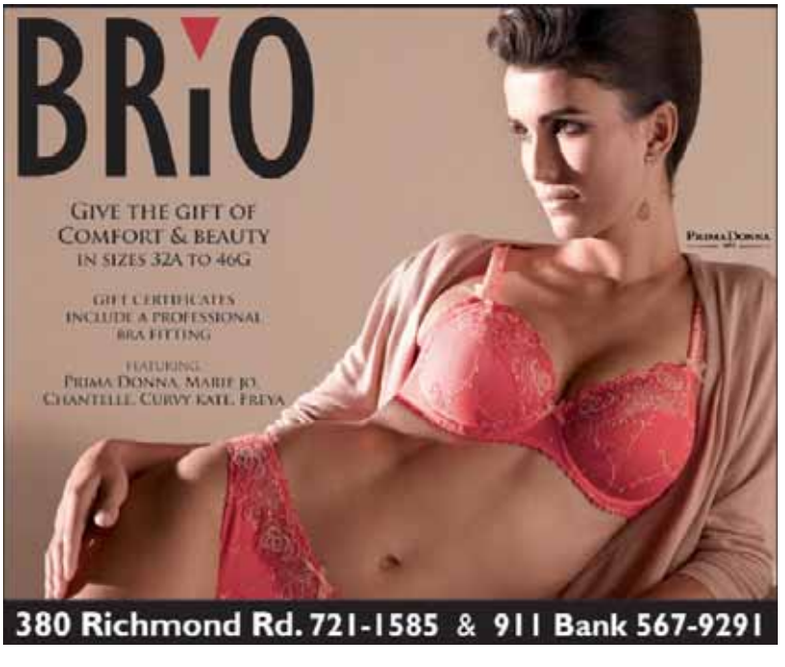
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Classic gifts for the pickiest decorator

Imagine having the task of buying a Christmas present for someone who not only has it all, but seemingly has great taste and knows what they like. That's what my family and friends run up against every Christmas — trying to buy me something I don't already have or will like enough to have in my home. Truth be told, designers are probably the simplest to buy for, as long as you don't give short-lived trend items. By keeping the choices classic and useful, your gift will be a hit with your favourite design aficionado. Here's a few that topped my wish list this holiday season. Some cost as little as a dollar and some hundreds. I'd love all of them under my tree this year, Mr. Santa...

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

The fuzzy feeling

Whether it be real or faux, a fur throw slung over a chair or end of the bed has always made a luxurious statement in the home. From year to year the fur colours change (this year it's pale browns and greys), and there is always an animal print in fashion. Take a cue from designer Brian Gluckstein and his collection of throws (with a handsome leather carry handle) and live like a designer. Faux Fur Throw, $149, thebay.com.

Clink, clink on the cheap

Nothing breaks the mood of a fancy party than having to use the wrong glass when toasting a celebration. And trust me, using a wine glass to serve champagne does not impress anyone who is style conscious. I like to stock up on glass ones and have plenty of them. My go-to store is the Dollarama. Glass Champagne Flutes, $1, dollarama.com.

A simple touch

A decorative box can sit handsomely on a front foyer table to hold keys, coins and cards, or on a dresser to hold jewelry, pens and keepsakes in the bedroom. The Agresti Gold Leaf Box adds simple lines and a subtle gold shine to decorate any table or dresser top. $795, birks.com.

Crystal accent

The classic round shape of the rose bowl (or goldfish bowl, as it's commonly called) is perfect for flowers. Three rose bowls in a row creates a modern appeal down the centre of a dining table or on a mantel. Tiffany's Floral Vine Rose Bowl holds a dozen red roses, a candle and more, $330, tiffany.ca.

Light it up

There is no decorator out there that doesn't like candles, and even better are a collection of candles on a tray. It's the perfect centrepiece on a dining table, coffee table or in the bath. Inexpensive candles mean filling the tray without breaking the bank. Glade Winter Collection Candles, $5.50 each, glade.ca.

Charger chic

Decorate the simplest of china by adding a layer of silver underneath. Charger plates create instant shimmer and luxury to a dinner party table. Add cool silver shine and the natural imprint of woodgrain with charger plates from President's Choice, $10 for 4. loblaws.ca.

A festive feast with a small ecological footprint?

Can my festive holiday feast also have a small footprint?

QUEEN OF GREEN
Tovah Paglaro
green@metronews.ca

The holiday season is about family, community, celebration … and food! Delicious food. The most festive of holiday feasts are both delicious and sustainable — a joyous combination that's within everybody's reach. And while that perfect balance is something of considerable debate, a few simple steps will elevate your table to one worthy of the love you bear for friends and family.

Step #1: Waste not, want not

Canadians produce an estimated $27 billion in food waste every year, and half of that is household food. That's not festive! Cook an appropriate amount of food for the size of your gathering, and plan for the leftovers.

Step #2: Cook from scratch

The closer you start to raw ingredients, the more nutritious and the more sustainable your meal is likely to be. Before you reach for the BPA-lined can of cranberry sauce or the packet of gravy mix, ask yourself, "Can I make this from scratch?" The answer is a resounding yes.

Step #3: Buy local and organic

Organic food does cost more. That's because it's more expensive to produce than conventional alternatives, which we often subsidize with environmental sacrifice and long-term health costs. But since you're now committed to not wasting any food, and to cooking from scratch, you're going to save so much money you can probably offset the cost of buying more sustainable options.

Step #4: Avoid serving GMO

Unlike most of Europe, Canada does not require labelling of foods containing genetically modified ingredients. Certified organic foods cannot, by definition, contain GMO ingredients. Outside of those parameters, buy carefully. The good news for your holiday feast is that there are no GMO varieties of wheat, potatoes or root vegetables on the market. However, beware of conventional canola oil or soy derivatives.

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Is this the last supper?

A bite of Belize. This country was once home to the ancient Mayans, who are said to have predicted the end of the world on Dec. 21. If that's the case, go out with a full stomach

"Cochinita (small pig) pibil (to bury) literally translates to 'buried whole suckling pig,'" write the editors of Flavors of Belize magazine in their book of the same name about this recipe.

"Traditionally, you should marinate the pork in the same manner but cook the whole pig wrapped in banana leaves underground with fire wood and hot stones for hours until tender."

This recipe by Chef Sean Kuylen can also be cooked in a slow cooker, on low for 12 hours or on high for six hours.

Ingredients

- 5 lbs pork shoulder or pork leg, bone in
- 1 head garlic
- 1 1/2 tbsp salt
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 1/2 tsp allspice
- 1 1/2 tbsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp red recado, diluted to form paste
- 1/2 cup sour orange juice
- Smoked banana leaves
- 2 medium onions, quartered
- 2 medium green bell peppers, quartered
- 1/4 cup cilantro, minced

1. Preheat oven to 325 F. Pierce pork with knife and insert garlic cloves all around.

2. Mix all dry ingredients; combine with recado, diluted in orange juice and coat pork. Marinate overnight.

3. Place pork in large roasting pan lined with banana leaves. Add onion, sweet pepper and place cilantro on top. Pour remaining marinade liquid and add more water to pan to approximately 1 inch high. Cover with banana leaves and seal tightly with foil.

4. Bake for 5 hours or until meat is very tender and starts to release from the bone. Shred pork and serve on warm corn tortillas topped with pickled red onions or habanero salsa.

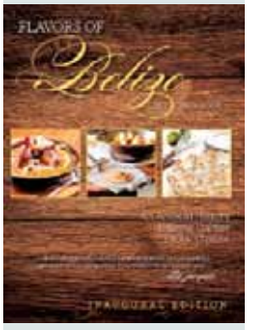
Pureco Cochinita Pibil

This recipe serves eight. MATT ARMENDARIZ FOR FLAVORS OF BELIZE: THE COOKBOOK

ALL RECIPES ON THIS PAGE FROM FLAVORS OF BELIZE: THE COOKBOOK (MCNAB PUBLISHING LTD)

Cookbook of the Week

Dine like the Mayans



Published by McNab Publishing Ltd., Flavors of Belize includes a selection of soups and starters, main dishes and delectable desserts. Additionally, this cookbook hosts a variety of submissions from some of Belize's most renowned chefs and cooks. Each section opens with a brief explanation of the different cultures, whose history acts as the foundation of Belizean heritage. This colourful gastronomic guide delivers more than 120 recipes spanning cultures including the Maya, British, Mestizo, Creole, Chinese, Lebanese, Garifuna and more.

Panades: A Belizean snack

"Locally, cooks use red recado to differentiate between panades fillings. The red colour from the recado paste represents the fish, and the plain masa is for the beans," write the editors of Flavors of Belize magazine in their cookbook. "(The Panades may be filled) with refried beans. When using refried beans, eliminate red recado paste from the recipe."

1. For Fish Filling: place fish, epazote and cilantro in a pot with enough water to cover, boil until fish is cooked, approximately 15 minutes. Remove fish from pot and cool. Flake fish, combine with salt, black pepper, onion and garlic.

2. For Recado Paste: Grind annatto seeds, allspice seeds and whole cloves to a powder. Combine annatto powder with sour orange and 1/4 cup of vinegar and process to a paste. May add more sour orange and vinegar if necessary to achieve a thick paste. Store in refrigerator.

3. For Panades, mix masa, baking powder and salt. Dissolve recado in water and add to masa until soft and masa holds. If using Masa harina, follow instructions on package. Form into 1 1/2 inch balls.

This recipe serves 4 to 6. MATT ARMENDARIZ FOR FLAVORS OF BELIZE: THE COOKBOOK

4. Place ball of masa in between 2 sheets of parchment paper in the centre of a tortilla press and flatten. Place approximately 1 teaspoon of fish in the middle and fold over to form a patty, press edges to seal. Do not overfill.

5. Heat oil in a large frying pan and fry Panades until it floats, turn and cook until slightly crisp. Serve with hot pepper onion sauce.

6. For Hot Pepper Onion Sauce: Combine all ingredients and marinate for 2 hours or overnight. Will keep for several weeks in refrigerator.

Ingredients

Fish Filling
- 2 lbs fish filet
- 6 epazote leaves, minced
- 2 to 3 tbsp cilantro leaves, minced
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp onion, minced
- 1 tsp garlic, minced

Red Recado Paste
- 5 tbsp annatto seeds
- 6 to 7 allspice seeds
- 1/4 tsp whole cloves
- 1/4 cup sour orange
- 1/4 cup vinegar

Panades
- 1 1/2 lbs corn masa or 2 cups Quaker Masa Harina de Maiz mix
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp red recado paste (see above)
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 1/2 cups fish filet, cooked, flaked
- Vegetable oil for frying

Hot Pepper Onion Sauce
- 2 cups onions, minced
- 2 habanero peppers, deseeded, sliced
- 2 tbsp cilantro, minced
- 6 allspice seeds
- 1 1/2 cups vinegar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tsp salt

Dukunu. In ancient Mayan culture, corn was considered a gift from gods

Cooked pork can be added after placing the mixture in corn husk. MATT ARMENDARIZ FOR FLAVORS OF BELIZE: THE COOKBOOK

"In ancient Maya culture, corn represented much more than a grain used for food," write the editors of Flavors of Belize magazine in their cookbook. "Corn was also considered a gift from the gods and cultivating it was a sacred duty. In fact, according to the sacred book of the Maya, (Popol Vuh), the gods created humans from corn."

1. Peel corn, reserving clean husks. Purée corn with water in a blender. Pour into a large mixing bowl and mix with the remaining ingredients.

2. Place 1/4 to 1/3 cup mixture onto the centre of each reserved husk. Bring sides together, making sure to overlap and fold pointed end upward. Secure each with string.

3. Place 2 to 3 inches of water in sauce pot, bring to a boil and arrange dukunu folded side down. Boil for about 1/2 hour. Remove from husk and serve.

Ingredients

- 10 to 12 green corn on the cob, shucked
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup coconut milk
- 2 tbsp butter, melted
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp sugar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

SPECIAL INFORMATION FEATURE

Musical Monkeys hit the right notes

Collaboration. Flying Monkeys Brewery teaming up with iconic Canadian rock bands

JEFF O'REILLY
For Metro

Just when I thought It's All Been Done, I hear about something so cool that I almost need you to Pinch Me.

When word that Barrie's wildly adventurous Flying Monkeys Brewery was launching its Treble Clef series of limited release collaboration beer with iconic Canadian rock bands — and that its first brew was with The Barenaked Ladies — it seemed like a match made in heaven.

I couldn't have pictured more kindred spirits — irrepressibly quirky, bursting with gregarious personality, boundless energy, exuberant joy and zany mad-cap humour in the way they both approach their crafts. So, when Peter Chiodo, the brewery's visionary founder and brewer, formulated a concept and recipe, he invited members of the band to come down for a full hands-on day of brewing.

With Chiodo providing "The Ladies" with a crash course in brewing (full of math, science and history that unravelled the mysteries) and some primo ingredients — including using two million Ecuadorian cocoa nibs and four times the amount of ingredients as you would find in a regular batch of Flying Monkey's brews — this beer provides a symphony for the taste buds, complete with co-operative BNL/Flying Monkey inspired artwork and packaging.

Can a beer that plays your favourite song while being poured and/or drank be far behind?

Flying Monkey's BNL Imperial Chocolate Stout (10 per cent alcohol by volume, LCBO, $13.95 for a 750 ml bottle) pours an opaque, deep mahogany with thick, creamy mocha head into a shaker style pint glass. The room is immediately filled with massive swirling "fudgey" chocolate aromas that are a prelude to rich, dry baker's chocolate, milk chocolate, dark fudge, and roasted cocoa bean flavours.

Well-balanced

"It's astoundingly well-balanced with a perfect medium body, finishing off slightly dry and bitter with no residual stickiness or lingering aftertaste."

This is probably the most complex and amplified (like an amp turned up to 11) layer upon layer of chocolate nuances that I have tasted in a beer.

It's astoundingly well-balanced with a perfect medium body, finishing off slightly dry and bitter with no residual stickiness or lingering aftertaste.

If you are looking for a cool gift for the music, chocolate and beer lover you have hit the jackpot.

Julie raises a Christmas toast with a pint of Flying Monkey's BNL Imperial Chocolate Stout. JEFF O'REILLY/FOR METRO

Wines for turkey dinner and new year's celebrations

SEASONAL SIPS
Allyson Bycraft
For Metro

Christmas Turkey Dinner, Dec. 25: Since there is often a crowd around at holiday time, we usually recommend a budget-conscious wine that will please everyone. If, however, your holiday dinner is going to be an intimate affair, you might want to splash out on the wine.

Pinot Noir is a great match with roast turkey. Try the Morgan 12 Clones Pinot Noir 2009 ($38.95, LCBO #642249) from the Santa Lucia Highlands in Monterey County on California's central coast, a new world benchmark region for this grape variety. Available at Vintages.

New Year's Eve, Dec. 31: It's time for bubbly and, once again, if it's going to be a small group and you are looking for something special, look no further than champagne.

Barnaut Blanc de Noirs Brut Grand Cru Champagne ($44.95, LCBO #301887) is a product that is new to the Ontario market. A blanc de noirs is a white wine made entirely from black grapes — in this case, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier.

Such wines are usually fuller bodied and more intense and this one is no exception. You will find it has more oomph than champagne usually does. Available at Vintages.

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Entertaining. Add cheese to your festive season

CURD ON THE STREET
Vanessa Simmons
For Metro

Add a cheesy element to your plans this festive season by introducing a cheese course to your holiday meal, or wine and cheese tasting as a cocktail party substitute.

If cheese is in your holiday entertaining plans, here are some quick tips:

Plan ahead
Who are you entertaining — adventurous, conservative, children? Will a meal or snacks be served? What are your favourite cheeses?

Be a savvy shopper
Taste in advance but buy as close as possible to your celebration at a reputable cheesemonger or cheese counter. Always ask that a fresh wedge be cut for you. Find local Ottawa region cheese makers at holiday farmers' or artisan markets at this time of year.

Serve cheese with star treatment
Serve at room temperature. Offer one knife per cheese. Don't cut up small pieces in advance. Use an interesting wooden board, cross-cut log, plate, slate or marble tiles or tiered trays for visual appeal. Keep it simple and your cheese will shine.

Mix it up
Consider taste, style and texture. Choose a theme — region, milk type (cow, sheep, goat, buffalo) or category (fresh, soft, semi-soft, washed, firm, hard, blue). Three to five cheeses display well on a board, or serve one stellar cheese as an appetizer or dessert.

Complement your cheese
Serve specialty breads, gourmet crackers, fresh seasonal or dried fruits, figs, dates, raw or toasted nuts, olives, caramelized or pickled onions or milder charcuterie items as accompaniments. Add artisan wine or craft beer, but remember that balance is key and neither the wine nor the beer should overpower the cheese.

Enjoy every last crumb
Slow down and savour each morsel of cheese. The holidays are a special time of year to make merry with friends, family (and cheese). Conversations around the cheese board create lasting memories of your special event.

Store cheese properly
Wrap leftovers of soft, semi-soft and washed rind cheeses in parchment or cheese paper and pop into a small Tupperware or sealable plastic bag.

FOR INFORMATION ON SAVVY COMPANY AND ITS CHEESE SOMMELIER VANESSA SIMMONS, GO TO SAVVYCOMPANY.CA

Serve cheese with a star treatment by using an interesting wooden board plate or slate. CREATAS IMAGES/THINKSTOCK

A local, hand-crafted cheese board. VANESSA SIMMONS/FOR METRO

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NHLPA waiting on NHL to resume talks: Fehr

Lockout. League not sure progress can be made at this point

Quoted

"We don't have anything new to say right now."

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly on the status of negotiations. Daly created a stir earlier in the day when he made an appearance on CBC's HNIC Radio and was asked to give a simple yes or no answer on whether there would be an agreement in time to save the season. He responded "yes."

Donald Fehr says the NHL Players' Association is ready to get back to the bargaining table at any moment.

He's just waiting for the NHL to feel the same way.

"(We aren't talking) because the owners have not indicated a desire to resume," the NHLPA's executive director said Wednesday night before a charity game. "We've indicated any number of times that we're willing to resume when they are (and) we're willing to resume without preconditions.

"So we're waiting to hear back from them."

The sides haven't negotiated with one another since Dec. 6 in New York, when talks broke down. They also met with a U.S. federal mediator for two days in New Jersey last week and reported no progress.

From the NHL's perspective, negotiations should only resume once there is something new to say.

"I don't think either party is refusing a meeting," deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in an email. "But unless there is an indication one side or the other is prepared to move or has a new idea to move the process forward — and so far neither side has indicated — I am not sure what we would do at the meeting.

"What is the agenda? Who is directing the conversation?"

Fehr indicated that he liked the idea put forward by Winnipeg Jets defenceman Ron Hainsey that the same parties who met two weeks ago return to the bargaining table, plus himself and commissioner Gary Bettman. Progress was made during a session that included four new owners and a number of players, including Sidney Crosby.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Taking back Stanley?

Reclaiming cup not on GG's mind

The Stanley Cup may have been created by the office of Canada's Governor General — but don't count on the current office-holder to take the trophy back.

Gov. Gen. David Johnston chuckled when asked whether the prospect of a cancelled season could prompt him to reclaim Canada's beloved relic.

Edmonton MP Brent Rathgeber has suggested the cup could be awarded in a competition to determine the best non-pro team in Canada. Also, one of the cup's full-time guardians recently said it would be "exciting" to have a mock tournament if the season is cancelled. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadians have strong showing at French World Cup event

Armin Niederer of Switzerland, third from left, performs during the final race on his way to winning a men's ski cross World Cup event ahead of Calgary's Brady Leman, right, American Joe Swensson, second from left, and London, Ont.'s David Duncan on Wednesday in Val Thorens, France. Leman finished behind Niederer for his second silver medal of the season and Duncan couldn't quite catch Swensson for bronze. LAURENT CIPRIANI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tebow talk turns to possible CFL sojourn

To Tebow or not to Tebow.

That's the CFL question.

With the New York Jets electing to bypass quarterback Tim Tebow as starter Mark Sanchez's replacement for Sunday's game, there has been plenty of speculation and rumours out of the NFL that he might just leave and try tossing footballs next season in Canada.

Apparently, his negotiation rights are now held by the Montreal Alouettes, who just signed 40-year-old Anthony Calvillo to a new two-year contract.

Tim Tebow GETTY IMAGES

The Hamilton Tiger-Cats used to have the former first-round NFL draft pick's negotiating rights but dropped him during the season.

Negotiating rights are secret in the CFL so it's only speculative that Montreal has them right now. But sources suggest they do.

Several CFL teams need a quarterback, Winnipeg for one. But even if the Jets release him, chances are some other NFL team will take a shot at him.

Tebow hasn't started a single game since being traded to the Jets from Denver in the off-season.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NFL

Authorities finish Belcher investigation

Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Jovan Belcher apparently was worried he would lose his baby and money to his long-time girlfriend before fatally shooting her and killing himself, according to newly released police reports.

Belcher also complained about Kasandra Perkins, the mother of the couple's three-month-old daughter, in conversations and text messages sent to a woman he was dating on the side, the reports show.

In one text message from late October or early November, Belcher wrote he "would shoot" Perkins "if she didn't leave him alone." The girlfriend told police that Belcher said "his child's mother threatened to take all his money and his child if they split up."

Belcher shot Perkins multiple times in their home on Dec. 1 and then drove to team headquarters, where he killed himself in front of his coach and general manager.

The Jackson County prosecutor's office reviewed the police reports, which first were obtained by the Kansas City Star, before closing the case Friday. It formally ruled the deaths of Belcher, 25, and Perkins, 22, a murder-suicide.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	18	6	.750	—
Miami	16	6	.727	1
Atlanta	15	7	.682	2
Chicago	14	10	.583	4
Milwaukee	13	10	.565	41/2
Brooklyn	13	11	.542	5
Indiana	13	12	.520	51/2
Boston	12	12	.500	6
Philadelphia	12	13	.480	61/2
Orlando	11	13	.458	7
Charlotte	7	17	.292	11
Toronto	7	19	.269	12
Detroit	7	20	.259	121/2
Cleveland	5	21	.192	14
Washington	3	19	.136	14

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	20	4	.833	—
L.A. Clippers	18	6	.750	2
Memphis	16	6	.727	3
San Antonio	19	8	.704	21/2
Golden State	17	8	.680	31/2
Denver	14	12	.538	7
Utah	14	12	.538	7
Minnesota	12	11	.522	71/2
Houston	12	12	.500	8
Dallas	12	13	.480	81/2
Portland	11	12	.478	81/2
L.A. Lakers	12	14	.462	9
Phoenix	10	15	.400	101/2
Sacramento	7	17	.292	13
New Orleans	5	19	.208	15

Division leaders ranked in top three positions and best eight teams qualify for playoffs

Wednesday's results
Utah at Indiana
Detroit at Toronto
Brooklyn at New York
Washington at Orlando
Oklahoma City at Atlanta
Cleveland at Boston
Philadelphia at Houston
Charlotte at Phoenix
Milwaukee at Memphis
Golden State at Sacramento
New Orleans at L.A. Clippers

Tuesday's results
Toronto 113 Cleveland 99
Atlanta 100 Washington 95 OT
Utah 92 Brooklyn 90
Miami 103 Minnesota 92
Chicago 100 Boston 89
Milwaukee 98 Indiana 93
Dallas 107 Philadelphia 100
Denver 112 San Antonio 106
L.A. Lakers 101 Charlotte 100
Golden State 103 New Orleans 96

Thursday's games
Oklahoma City at Minnesota, 7 p.m.
Miami at Dallas, 9:30 p.m.
Denver at Portland, 10 p.m.

Friday's games
Atlanta at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Orlando at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Chicago at New York, 7:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Washington at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
Indiana at Cleveland, 7:30 p.m.
Dallas at Memphis, 8 p.m.
New Orleans at San Antonio, 8:30 p.m.
Charlotte at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.
Sacramento at L.A. Clippers, 10:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

RAPTORS 113, CAVALIERS 99

TORONTO (113)
Calderon 10-15 0-0 23, Anderson 6-12 1-2 18, Johnson 6-7 5-5 17, DeRozan 4-9 8-8 16, Lucas 4-7 1-1 11, Kleiza 2-6 6-7 10, Valanciunas 3-6 2-4 8, Davis 2-7 0-0 4, Pietrus 1-4 0-0 3, Ross 1-2 0-0 3. Totals 39-75 23-27 113.

CLEVELAND (99)
Irving 9-16 3-5 23, Varejao 5-12 12-16 22, Gee 6-8 2-3 15, Miles 4-7 3-3 13, Thompson 5-8 0-1 10, Waiters 4-13 0-2 8, Gibson 2-3 0-0 6, Zeller 1-2 0-0 2, Walton 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 36-70 20-30 99.

Toronto	22	27	29	35 —113
Cleveland	29	24	23	23 — 99

3-Point Goals—Toronto 12-24 (Anderson 5-7, Calderon 3-6, Lucas 2-3, Pietrus 1-3, Kleiza 0-3, Ross 1-1, DeRozan 0-1). Cleveland 7-16 (Irving 2-5, Miles 2-4, Gibson 2-3, Waiters 0-2, Gee 1-1, Walton 0-1). **Rebounds—**Toronto 36 (Valanciunas 7, Johnson 6, Anderson 6, DeRozan 5, Calderon 5, Davis 4, Kleiza 1, Lucas 1, Ross 1). Cleveland 33 (Varejao 10, Thompson 9, Gee 4, Miles 4, Irving 3, Zeller 2, Gibson 1). **Assists—**Toronto 25 (Calderon 6). Cleveland 19 (Irving 7). **Total Fouls—**Toronto 24, Cleveland 26.
A—13,233. T—2:18

AHL

Wednesday's result
Abbotsford at Chicago
St. John's at Adirondack
Springfield at Portland
Norfolk at Hershey
Albany at Bridgeport
Toronto at Lake Erie
Rochester at Grand Rapids
W-B/Scranton at Binghamton
Rockford at Milwaukee
San Antonio at Texas

Tuesday's result
Peoria 4 Hamilton 3 (SO)

Thursday's games
All Times Eastern
Houston at Lake Erie, 7 p.m.
Peoria at Charlotte, 7 p.m.

Friday's games
Connecticut at Manchester, 7 p.m.
San Antonio at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Peoria at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Abbotsford at Grand Rapids, 7 p.m.
Binghamton at Rochester, 7:05 p.m.
Worcester at Providence, 7:05 p.m.
St. John's at Hamilton, 7:30 p.m.
Albany at Norfolk, 7:30 p.m.
Adirondack at Syracuse, 7:30 p.m.
Rockford at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
Texas at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.

SOCCER

SCOTLAND

DIVISION 3
Tuesday's result
East Stirlingshire 2, Montrose 2

DFB POKAL

THIRD ROUND
Tuesday's results
Bochum 3, 1860 Munich 0
Borussia Dortmund 5, Hannover 1
Stuttgart 2, Cologne 1
Wolfsburg 2, Bayer Leverkusen 1

TRANSACTIONS

MLB

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE — Suspended free agent minor league RHP Kyle Pelchy 50 games for refusing to take an off-season drug test.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Agreed to terms with 1B Travis Ishikawa, LHP Daniel Schlereth and LHP Zach Braddock on minor league contracts.
BOSTON RED SOX — Agreed to terms with RHP Ryan Dempster on a two-year contract. Designated RHP Pedro Beato for assignment.
CLEVELAND INDIANS — Designated OF Russ Canzler for assignment. Agreed to terms with RHP Joe Martinez and C Brian Jeroloman on minor league contracts.
DETROIT TIGERS — Released LHP Adam Wilk. Assigned LHP Matt Hoffman outright to Toledo (EL).
HOUSTON ASTROS — Named Meg Vaillancourt vice president of community relations and executive director of the Astros In Action Foundation. Traded LHP Rob Rasmussen to the L.A. Dodgers for RHP John Ely.
NEW YORK YANKEES — Agreed to terms with OF Ichiro Suzuki on a two-year contract. Designated RHP Jim Miller for assignment.
SEATTLE MARINERS — Traded LHP Jason Vargas to the L.A. Angels for 1B/DH Kendrys Morales.
TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Agreed to terms with 2B Lance Zawadzki on a minor league contract. Claimed RHP Mickey Storey off waivers from Houston.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Named Steve Sax first base coach and Turner Ward assistant hitting coach. Named Greg Gross hitting coach of Reno (PCL); Andy Green manager and Jacob Cruz hitting coach of Mobile (SL); Bill Plummer manager and Gil Heredia pitching coach of Visalia (Cal); Jason Camilli hitting coach of South Bend (MWL); Robby Hammock manager, Doug Bochtler pitching coach and Wilson Valera hitting coach of Missoula (Pioneer); and Luis Urueta manager of the Arizona League Diamondbacks.
COLORADO ROCKIES — Agreed to terms with LHP Jeff Francis on a one-year contract.
MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Alfredo Figaro on a minor league contract.

FRONTIER LEAGUE

LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS — Named Jeff Isom manager.
RIVER CITY RASCALS — Signed 1B Mike Bando and 3B Jason Taylor to contract extensions.
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS MINERS — Sent LHP Nick Cicio and LHP Darrin Tew to Rockford to complete an earlier trade.
TRAVERSE CITY BEACH BUMS — Signed 2B Ryan Still to a contract extension. Released LHP Bennett Whitmore. Exercised the 2013 contract options on LHP Nick Capito, RHP Jason Mattila, RHP Scott Dunn, RHP Brooks Belter, RHP Michael Devine, RHP Jacob Clem, RHP Scott Mueller, RHP Jake Sabol, C Travis Higgs, C Marcus Nififfer, INF Jose Vargas, INF Kyle Eveland, INF Chase Burch, INF Jeff Flagg, INF Sean Gusrang, OF Kyle Colligan, OF Matt Howard, OF Brian Heere, RHP Reid Kelly and RHP Kurt Wunderlich.

NFL

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Released TE Steve Skelton from the practice squad.
BALTIMORE RAVENS — Released LB D.J. Bryant from the practice squad. Signed RB Lonyae Miller to the practice squad.
BUFFALO BILLS — Signed WR Kevin Elliott and LB Brian Smith to the practice squad.
CAROLINA PANTHERS — Placed C Zack Williams on injured reserve. Signed G Hayworth Hicks from the practice squad.
CHICAGO BEARS — Signed G Reggie Stephens to the practice squad.
CLEVELAND BROWNS — Signed TE George Bryan to the practice squad.
DALLAS COWBOYS — Released DE Robert Rose from the practice squad.
DETROIT LIONS — Placed CB Jacob Lacey on injured reserve. Signed CB Rob Bartell. Signed DB Ross Weaver to the practice squad. Placed DT Nick Fairley on injured reserve. Signed DT Ogemdi Nwagbuo.
GREEN BAY PACKERS — Signed CB Otis Merrill to the practice squad.
INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Released G Robert Griffin from the practice squad. Signed T Lee Ziemba to the practice squad.
MIAMI DOLPHINS — Placed RB Daniel Thomas on injured reserve. Signed DB Julian Posey from the practice squad.
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Placed CB Corey White on injured reserve. Signed WR Saalim Hakim from the practice squad.
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Placed TE Clay Harbor on injured reserve.
PITTSBURGH STEELERS — Reinstated RB Rashard Mendenhall from the suspended list. Placed G Willie Colon and CB DeMarcus Van Dyke on injured reserve. Signed DB Justin King.
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Signed LB Kyle Knox and DE Monte Taylor to the practice squad.
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Signed TE Drake Dunsmore and LB Joe Holland to the practice squad.
WASHINGTON REDSKINS — Released LB Kourtnei Brown from the practice squad.

CFL

TORONTO ARGONAUTS — Released S Etienne Boulay. Re-signed DL Donte Paige-Moss. Signed LB Shane Horton.

AHL

ALBANY DEVILS — Loaned C Phil DeSimone to Trenton (ECHL).
BRIDGEPORT SOUND TIGERS — Signed F Scott Campbell to a professional tryout contract.

MLS

CHICAGO FIRE — Announced the resignation of president Julian Posada.
D.C. UNITED — Re-signed D Robbie Russell.

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	10	4	0	.714	506	315
N.Y. Jets	6	8	0	.429	255	320
Miami	6	8	0	.429	264	279
Buffalo	5	9	0	.357	306	402

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	12	2	0	.857	394	280
Indianapolis	9	5	0	.643	309	358
Tennessee	5	9	0	.357	285	396
Jacksonville	2	12	0	.143	219	383

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	9	5	0	.643	348	307
Cincinnati	8	6	0	.571	355	293
Pittsburgh	7	7	0	.500	302	291
Cleveland	5	9	0	.357	280	310

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Denver	11	3	0	.786	409	274
San Diego	5	9	0	.357	299	312
Oakland	4	10	0	.286	263	402
Kansas City	2	12	0	.143	195	367

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

EAST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Washington	8	6	0	.571	381	350
Dallas	8	6	0	.571	327	338
N.Y. Giants	8	6	0	.571	373	304
Philadelphia	4	10	0	.286	253	375

SOUTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	12	2	0	.857	371	259
New Orleans	6	8	0	.429	389	379
Tampa Bay	6	8	0	.429	354	349
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	296	319

NORTH

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Green Bay	10	4	0	.714	344	292
Minnesota	8	6	0	.571	319	308
Chicago	8	6	0	.571	321	240
Detroit	4	10	0	.286	330	380

WEST

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
San Francisco	10	3	1	.750	357	218
Seattle	9	5	0	.643	350	219
St. Louis	6	7	1	.464	258	315
Arizona	5	9	0	.357	224	302

x — clinched playoff berth; **y** — clinched division.

WEEK 16

Saturday's game — All Times Eastern
Atlanta at Detroit, 8:30 p.m.

Sunday's games
Minnesota at Houston, 1 p.m.
Tennessee at Green Bay, 1 p.m.
Oakland at Carolina, 1 p.m.
San Diego at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.
New England at Jacksonville, 1 p.m.
Indianapolis at Kansas City, 1 p.m.
New Orleans at Dallas, 1 p.m.
St. Louis at Tampa Bay, 1 p.m.
Buffalo at Miami, 1 p.m.
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.
Washington at Philadelphia, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Denver, 4:05 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Baltimore, 4:25 p.m.
Chicago at Arizona, 4:25 p.m.
San Francisco at Seattle, 8:20 p.m.

WEEK 17

Sunday, Dec. 30
Tampa Bay at Atlanta, 1 p.m.
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo, 1 p.m.
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.
Chicago at Detroit, 1 p.m.
Houston at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.
Green Bay at Minnesota, 1 p.m.
Miami at New England, 1 p.m.
Carolina at New Orleans, 1 p.m.
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.
Jacksonville at Tennessee, 1 p.m.
Dallas at Washington, 1 p.m.
Kansas City at Denver, 4:15 p.m.
Oakland at San Diego, 4:15 p.m.
Arizona at San Francisco, 4:15 p.m.
St. Louis at Seattle, 4:15 p.m.
Note: Sunday night game to be determined

END OF REGULAR SEASON

HOCKEY

2013 CANADIAN WORLD JUNIOR HOCKEY TEAM ROSTER

Roster for the Canadian junior hockey team for the 2013 world junior championship Dec. 26-Jan. 5 in Ufa, Russia:

GOALTENDERS
Jordan Binnington, Richmond Hill, Ont., Owen Sound (OHL); Jake Paterson, Mississauga, Ont., Saginaw (OHL); Malcolm Subban, Toronto, Belleville (OHL).

DEFENCEMEN
Dougie Hamilton, Toronto, Niagara (OHL); Scott Harrington, Kingston, Ont., London (OHL); Ryan Murphy, Aurora, Ont., Kitchener (OHL); Xavier Ouellet, Terrebonne, Que., Blainville-Boisbriand (QMJHL); Griffin Reinhart, West Vancouver, B.C., Edmonton (WHL); Morgan Rielly, West Vancouver, B.C., Moose Jaw (WHL); Tyler Wotherspoon, Surrey, B.C., Portland (WHL).

FORWARDS
Anthony Camara, Toronto, Barrie (OHL); Phillip Danault, Victoriaville, Que., Victoriaville (QMJHL); Jonathan Drouin, Huberdeau, Que., Halifax (QMJHL); Jonathan Huberdeau, St-Jerome, Que., Saint John (QMJHL); Charles Hudon, Boisbriand, Que., Chicoutimi (QMJHL); Boone Jenner, Dorchester, Ont., Oshawa (OHL); JC Lipon, Regina, Kamloops (WHL); Nathan MacKinnon, Cole Harbour, N.S., Halifax (QMJHL); Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Burnaby, B.C., Oklahoma City (AHL); Ty Rattie, Airdrie, Alta., Portland (WHL); Brett Ritchie, Orangeville, Ont., Niagara (OHL); Mark Scheifele, Kitchener, Ont., Barrie (OHL);Ryan Strome, Mississauga, Ont., Niagara (OHL).

HEAD COACH
Steve Spott, Waterloo, Ont., Kitchener (OHL)

ASSISTANT COACHES
Mario Duhamel, St-Bruno, Que., Drummondville (QMJHJ), Don Nachbauer, Prince George, B.C., Spokane (WHL); Andre Tourigny, Nicolet, Que., Rouyn-Noranda (QMJHL).

GOALTENDING COACH
Ron Tugnutt, Peterborough, Ont., Hockey Canada.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
The Sun joins Mars, your ruler, in the career area of your chart tomorrow, so you will be even more ambitious than usual. Impress those in positions of power but try not to do so at the expense of other people.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You are up for whatever life throws at you and when the Sun changes signs tomorrow, there will no holding you back. However, after your initial burst of enthusiasm you will need to settle into a steady routine.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
It may at times seem as if the answers are "out there" waiting to be discovered but in reality they are "in here", where facts mean less than feelings. Take time to listen to your inner voice today — it has lots to tell you.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Don't worry too much if you have not been getting along with a certain person of late because you will soon be friends again. You will also find that your opinions were not nearly as far apart as you had previously believed.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You need to get serious about your work and your health. Because everything has been going so well for you of late, you have tended to overlook certain things but now it's time to take care of those boring details.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Do something creative, something that gets you noticed. Everyone was born with an ability of some kind, so focus on your own special talent and make it work for you on all kinds of levels, including financial.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
The next few days are going to be of added importance for family matters. You will certainly find it easier than usual to see the world through loved ones' eyes. Better understanding makes compromise possible.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
However hard you try, you will not change another person's viewpoint. And however hard they try, they will not change yours. So what can you do? You can steer clear of each other as much as is humanely possible.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Over the next few days, your thoughts will turn to what you own, what you earn and, more importantly, how you can start earning more. Get rid of a dozen ideas but the one that remains will make you rich.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The old solar year is coming to an end and when the Sun moves into your birth sign tomorrow, a new cycle will begin. After the disappointments of recent weeks, it will feel wonderful to know that all things are possible.

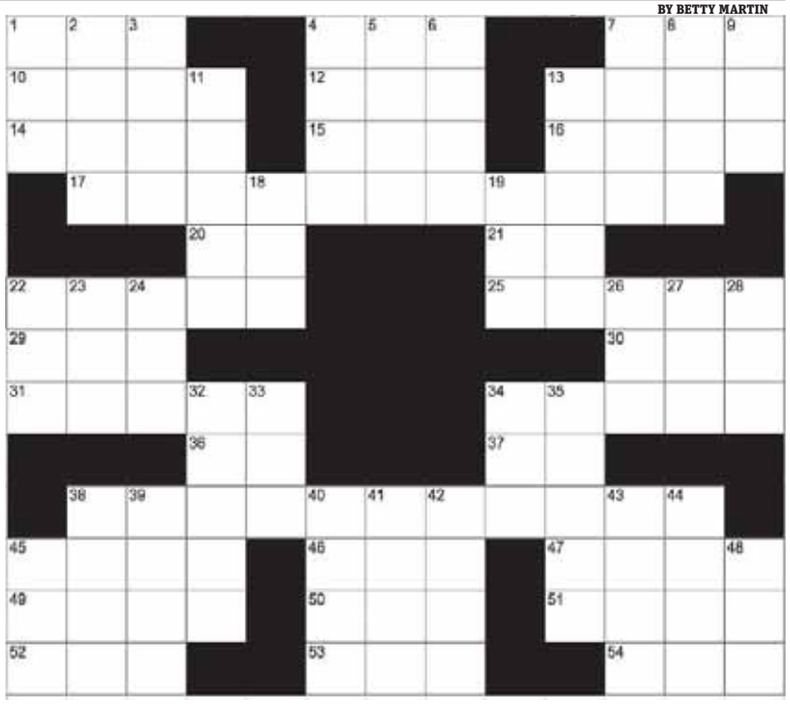
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Get away for a while. Leave the chaos and confusion of everyday life far behind. Before you go, let someone know that you do not exist to cater to their every whim. You have needs too and they must be satisfied.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Recent cosmic activity has made it possible for you to move up in your work or career. Now you must decide if you are happy with what you accomplished or if you want to go higher still. It's your choice.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword

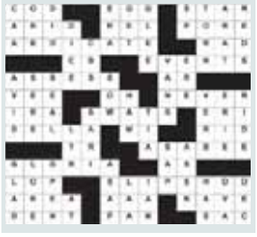
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Vestment
4. Keyboard key
7. Nickname of comedian Bill
10. One not to be trusted
12. Havana greeting
13. — 70's Show
14. Thin Man's dog
15. Soup container
16. Rodents
17. Stargazers
20. Movie alien
21. Egyptian Sun God
22. Touched by an Angel actress
25. Carry in inventory
29. Pester
30. "Norma —"
31. Tempest
34. Beautify
36. Battery sz.
37. Head out
38. Ethel's partner in hijinks
45. Pitch
46. Gobbled up
47. Tiny amount
49. Police activity
50. Cartoon pooch
51. Barbershop sound
52. Hill dweller
53. CPR specialist
54. Opposite of WNW

Down
1. Chicken – King
2. One of The Simpsons
3. Belfry inhabitants
4. Filled tortilla
5. Star of M*A*S*H
6. U2's lead vocalist
7. Cinders
8. Bran source
9. Ave. crossers
11. Hotel fees
13. Halloween indulgence
18. Road abbr.
19. Robinson or Doubtfire
22. Found in the ER
23. Have a bite
24. Self
26. Gold, to Juan
27. My Mother the —
28. Olin of thirtysomething
32. Participated in a marathon
33. Spring mo.
34. Turkish title
35. Roberts of Everybody Loves Raymond
38. Bank transaction
39. Kind of price
40. Steak order
41. Ledger entry
42. Penny
43. Completed
44. Soul singer Redding
45. La-la lead-in
48. Mimic

Yesterday's Crossword



What's online

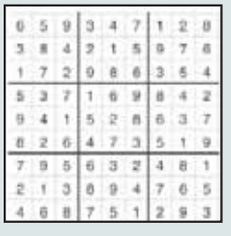
See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

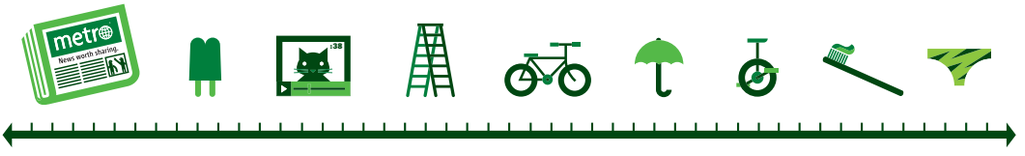
	8		6		2		3	
		3	4		1	8		
9								7
		5		1		2		
3								4
		4		3		7		
5								1
		6	8		3	5		
	4		1		9		8	

Yesterday's Sudoku



Today -2°/-4° Variable
Friday 1°/-8° Rain and snow 90%
Know what the weather will be 14 days from now.
Check the 14 day trend.
TWN incorporates MSC data

Sharability



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Offer(s) available on new 2013 models purchased through participating dealers to qualified retail customers who purchase an eligible vehicle by January 2, 2013. Dealers may sell for less. Some conditions apply. Offers are subject to change without notice. See dealer for complete details. (QUE): Taxes, registration, insurance, licensing and duty on new tires are excluded. (Rest of Canada): Includes destination, delivery and fees. Taxes, PPSA and dealer fees of up to $599 are excluded. ^ Limited-time offer available on all new 2011/2012/2013 vehicles through participating dealers to qualified retail customers until January 2, 2013. Offers are subject to change without notice. Some conditions apply. See dealer for details. MasterCard cards are issued by Citibank pursuant to a license by MasterCard International Incorporated. ® MasterCard is a registered trademark of MasterCard International Incorporated. ◊ No payments for 90 days is available on select new 2012 and 2013 models financed through Mitsubishi Motor Sales of Canada subvented financing programs on approved credit through participating dealers to qualified retail customers until January 2, 2013. Interest charges (if any) will not accrue during the first 60 days after purchaser signs contract for a participating vehicle. After the first 60 days, interest (if any) starts to accrue and the purchaser will repay principal and interest (if any) monthly over the term of the contract. See participating retailers for complete details. ‡ $2,500 in no-charge extra features applies to 2013 Lancer 10th Anniversary Edition for vehicles purchased up to January 2, 2013. Based on dealer inventory. See your dealer for details. ◊ 0% purchase financing available through Bank of Montreal for up to 48 months on new 2013 10th Anniversary Lancer models. (QUE): Excludes taxes, registration, insurance, licensing and duty on new tires. (Rest of Canada): Includes up to $1,450 in freight, $250 in PDI, $100 in air tax, up to $30 in EHF. Excludes $15 duty on new tires, taxes, PPSA, registration, insurance, licensing, administration, up to $599 in other dealer fees and any additional government fees. * Best backed claim does not cover Lancer Evolution, Lancer Ralliart or i-MiEV. ® MITSUBISHI MOTORS, BEST BACKED CARS IN THE WORLD are trade-marks of Mitsubishi Motors North America, Inc. and are used under license. ** Whichever comes first. Regular maintenance not included. See dealer or mitsubishi-mot ors.ca for warranty terms, restrictions and details. Not all customers will qualify.

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OR

$39/week Freight and PDI included Plus taxes with a $2000 trade or deposit Terms: 96 Months at 4.75%

2013 MAZDA2 GX

Starting at **$15,590** - $2,595 Cash Discount **$12,995** Freight and PDI Inc

OR

$32/week Freight and PDI included Plus taxes with a $2000 trade or deposit Terms: 96 Months at 4.75%

2013 MAZDA6 GS

Starting at **$26,045** - $5,000 Cash Discount **$21,045** Freight and PDI Inc

OR

$56/week Freight and PDI included Plus taxes with a $2000 trade or deposit Terms: 96 Months at 4.75%

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